

Book Reviews
and
Book Briefs

Book Reviews

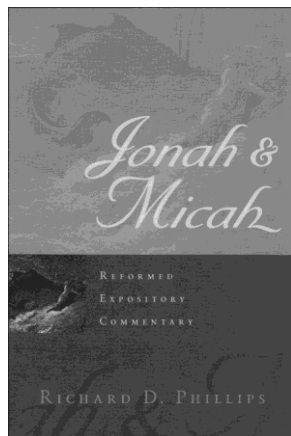
In our books section, we inform readers about works which have been recently added to the Haddington House Library. Most are recent publications, but on occasion we include rare and valuable books we have acquired which students, pastors, patrons and others may want to come and consult. All reviews are made in keeping with our editorial policy; that is, to help our readers in the stewardship of their resources and time. The *Journal* uses the standard abbreviation ‘hc’ to denote hard cover. The International Standard Book Number (ISBN) has been included with all books when available. We begin this section with “**Book Reviews**”, organized according to the four divisions of theology.

Biblical Theology

***Jonah & Micah.* Richard D. Phillips. Reformed Expository Commentary. Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2010, 381 pp., hc. ISBN 978-1-59638-114-8**

Richard Phillips has given us another very useful contribution to the Reformed Expository Commentary Series. Phillips is a senior pastor at Second Presbyterian Church in Greenville, South Carolina and co-editor of the series. His commentary on Jonah first saw the light of day in a series of sermons at First Presbyterian in Coral Springs, Florida and his work on Micah as a series of Bible studies in his home church. As with the whole series, this commentary is coming not just from an academic exegete but a gifted preacher who is able to tie together the disciplines of biblical and systematic theology in a very pastoral way that speaks to the urgent concerns of today’s generation, much like those of the prophets themselves.

In dealing with both prophets, Phillips shows that at the very heart of the prophets and Old Testament religion as a whole was the grace of God in Christ, even in Micah’s oracles of judgment. This is intentionally and richly brought out in each chapter of the book. In Jonah, chapter titles include: “The Messenger of Grace”, “The Grace of the Lord”, “The Grace of Repentance”



and “Growing in Grace”. In the preface Phillips says, “The book of Jonah challenges us to consider not only what it means to *believe* the gospel of God’s grace, but what it means to *live* the gospel of grace” (p. xiii).

Phillips understands Jesus’ remark “a greater than Jonah is here” (Matt. 12:41) and Micah’s prophesy of the ruler who would be born in Bethlehem, Ephrathah as the mandate for understanding the prophesy Christologically.

While Phillips sees grace as the dominant theme, that theme is woven throughout the book in the “doctrines of grace” which flow from it. All the constituent elements of the historic Reformed faith are in Jonah in the themes of election, sovereignty, and the glory and mercy of God. As a summary of this point, Phillips says, “If there is any story in the Bible that proves the truth of God’s unremitting sovereignty, that story must be Jonah’s. And if we realize the sovereign hand of God in all things, then we will receive the commands of his Word as sovereign calls to humbly obey” (pp. 130-131).

Yet, in Micah, Phillips addresses the problem, not of “denying” the grace of God of which Jonah was guilty, but of “presuming upon” God’s grace. “So confident were the Jews of Micah’s time that God would protect and preserve them that they gave themselves liberty to abuse and oppress their neighbours” (p. 221).

Micah, says Phillips, is not without grace in its delivery of a message of judgment. But Israel’s hope can only be seen “having first driven them to their knees in conviction over sin” (p. 188). I believe Phillips models for us what it is to preach the whole counsel of God. He shows us that only in preaching the wrath of God against sin can we more fully appreciate the need for grace.

His opening comments on Micah reflect Reformational theology’s high view of Scripture as the starting point of knowing God. This is the launching pad of the reforms Micah hopes to bring to the covenant community in particular. How important this is in an evangelical community today that has made the denying of fundamental doctrines like God’s judgment fashionable. It is only through our confidence in the Word as from God Himself that we will confidently speak to the world and bring reform to the church.

I cannot recommend this commentary and series highly enough. Phillips’ generous quotations from contemporary and classical preachers and authors show that we stand on the shoulders of giants and that preaching the faith is organically tied to writers of the past.

Since this material came originally in sermon form, it is not technical but most accessible. The commentary wonderfully combines solid theology in a devotional spirit which is the ultimate end of all theology.

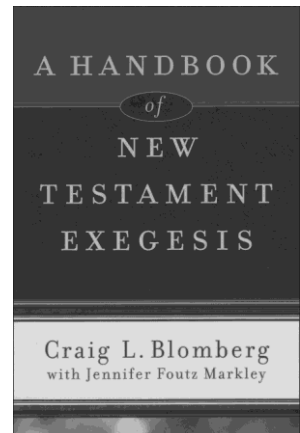
Reviewed by Kent I. Compton, the minister of the Western Charge of the Free Church of Scotland, PEI. Rev. Compton is a graduate of the University of Prince Edward Island and the Free Church College, Edinburgh.



***A Handbook of New Testament Exegesis.* Craig L. Blomberg with Jennifer Foutz Markley. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010, 298 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8010-3177-9**

As the title states, this volume deals specifically with the practice of exegesis in the New Testament. What separates this book, however, from other similar works is its declared design. Written for the Bible student with or without a working knowledge of *Koine* Greek, specialist and non-specialist alike, this handbook recognizes and addresses logistical and emotional barriers that hinder the student of Scripture from “faithfully elaborating a full-orbed exegesis of a given passage of Scripture” (p. xiii). This hindrance is associated with the shortcomings of other books related to exegesis in the New Testament. It is primarily selectivity, according to the authors, that detracts from the effectiveness of other works. One would tend to concur with this assessment. Some textbooks emphasize theory and others miss steps in the full exegetical process. Some offer limited treatment of methodology, others devote too much space to hermeneutical concerns. While Gordon Fee’s introductory textbook is acknowledged as popular and effective, the limited number of its examples used is pointed out as a weakness.¹ Since “exegesis is caught as much as it is taught” (p. xiii), the authors seek, in a vein similar to Fee, to increase the number of examples of exegesis and motivational comments. The book (to be thought of more as a “tool box”) follows the ten exegetical steps taught to students at Denver Seminary; however, the authors caution that different textual considerations may emphasize different steps of the exegetical process.

Dr. Craig L. Blomberg, distinguished professor of New Testament at Denver Seminary, Colorado, wrote this handbook in association with Jennifer Foutz Markley, who contributed five of the ten chapters. The volume is divided into ten chapters, corresponding to ten steps of exegesis. It is prefaced by a helpful introduction and closed by a thin summary and an appendix (“Checklist for Doing Biblical Exegesis”) that apparently repeats the summary in list format. A proper bibliography is absent. The chapters are as follows: 1. Textual Criticism, 2. Translation and Translations, 3. Historical-Cultural Context, 4. Literary Context, 5. Word Studies, 6. Grammar, 7. Interpretive Problems, 8. Outlining, 9. Theology, and 10. Application.



¹ Gordon D. Fee, *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*, 1st ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983).

Chapter one sets the stage for the approach in the rest of the chapters. In it is defined “textual criticism”, the terms relevant in its practice and a description of the history of the transmission of various extant texts along with important characteristics of these texts. This is followed by a lengthy discussion on how one practises textual criticism in the context of exegesis. An example of the utilization of text-critical skills takes 1 Thessalonians 2:7 with a focus on the word in question, “babes”. It is demonstrated, based on text-critical factors, why the word was chosen and why the word “gentle” is a close second for the translation committee. The student is taken logically through the steps and the results are justified. The information presented in this chapter is well-rounded. This chapter presents an unpretentiously readable and ample amount of information tempered by a commendable realism. Greek manuscripts, ancient translations and patristic citations are identified, and it is indicated why certain ones of the listed are more reliable than others.

As important as it is to understand the serious reason for textual criticism’s indispensability, the authors deflate any uneasiness by emphasizing that, “More than 99 percent of the original Greek New Testament can be reconstructed beyond any reasonable doubt” and the remaining variations pose no concern for “mainstream Christian doctrine” (p. 26).

Chapter two discusses the dynamics and challenges behind various translations, striving to imbibe a sense of the significance of the translations’ complexities. The student is introduced to the concepts of formal and functional/dynamic equivalence and the necessary balance that needs to exist between them. Other topics covered in this chapter are: choosing translations, translating metaphors, idioms and euphemisms, reproducing style and rhetorical effect, and inclusive language for humanity. The chapter is illustrated satisfactorily.

Chapter three is entitled “Historical-Cultural Context”. This chapter contains, specifically, the necessary tools for identifying particular aspects of the social atmosphere and historical context as the author and the audience of the text would have understood them (pp. 63-64). According to the authors, the analysis of the historical-cultural context must proceed both diachronically as well as synchronically. The authors instruct in their methodology, naming definite sources such as the Bible itself and ancient Jewish and Greco-Roman writings (pp. 68-84). Social-scientific criticism is also discussed, with caution (pp. 85-91). The institution of patronage as governed by reciprocity conventions is taken as an example, explained and illustrated by Paul’s interaction with the Philippian church and their generosity. It is unfortunate the system of benefaction was not mentioned, as this fits better with biblical examples. In this regard, appropriate references were also missing such as that of R. Saller (1982), particularly S. Joubert (2000, 2001) and A. Batten (2004). Patronage and benefaction of that time should be regarded as two distinguishable social systems with different cultural and geographical roots that are not to be equated in the modern mind.

The topic of literary context is presented in chapter four. A system of concentric layers of literary context is explained, and the student is instructed to navigate from the inner-circle of immediate context to the outer-circle of other books in the New Testament by different authors (pp. 94-102). The authors' approach is and should be compared to G. Osborne's (2006) concentric circles of logical context and his approach. This comparison immediately reveals that chapter four could have been composed more systematically and thoroughly. For instance, there is no guidance given for question formulation at the beginning inner-circle of immediate context.

Chapter five deals with word studies correctly and very thoroughly. The main terms and concepts are discussed within the bounds of sound rules. This chapter is well done. Following naturally from this topic is that of grammar in chapter six. The material is thorough yet concise, highly instructive yet readable and is filled with a good number of examples. The sidebar/chart (p. 151) entitled "Important Tasks in Grammatical Analysis" recommends itself as an indispensably useful summary tool for the exegete.

Interpretive problems are the topic of the seventh chapter. For the sake of clarity, the authors state that "issues of interpretation that are completely beyond final resolution are the exception and not the norm in the New Testament" (pp. 167-168). In this regard they are offering "advice on how to move beyond dependence on commentaries and recognize the issues involved in complex interpretive problems" (p. 168). The authors list a number of problems that may be encountered in scholarly literature and offer guidance concerning the best way to view these difficulties in light of one's own studies.

Chapter eight is a useful presentation providing a system for producing an exegetical outline of a text, not just for those with but also those without Greek training. Theology and application fill the remaining two chapters. There is a balance that needs to exist between Biblical and Systematic Theology that the authors defend by outlining the necessity and process by which legitimate theology proceeds from exegesis (pp. 227-237). The importance of the application of exegetical results is shown by the care taken to present the final chapter. It treats the extensive checks and balances necessary to application, which proceed from the totality of the exegetical endeavor and reminds the student of the importance of the Holy Spirit in the exercise. This final chapter is commendable. A short summary-review concludes the book.

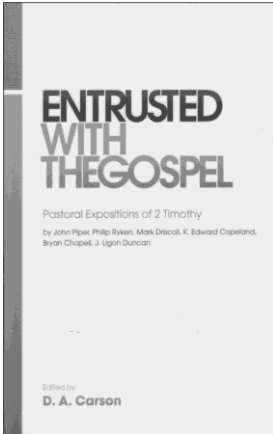
The work is what it claims to be, a handbook of exegesis; that is, one presented in ten logical steps. It is clear that the book has its strengths and weaknesses. The area of literary criticism is not as strong and instructive as in other textbooks. However, text criticism and other subjects are presented very well in an engaging manner. This book should be a useful addition to students, pastors and teachers alike. I do not think, though, that select volumes in the area of exegesis need replacing. Yet Blomberg and Foutz Markey's contribution should be adopted as a recommended resource and consulted for its valued theoretical and illustrative insights.

Reviewed by Rev. Dr. Frank Z. Kovács, Toronto, Ontario, a trustee of Haddington House and recent Ph.D. graduate from North-West University in South Africa.



***Entrusted with the Gospel: Pastoral Expositions of 2 Timothy.* Ed., D. A. Carson. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010, 158 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-4335-1583-5**

I was blessed by reading the book edited by D. A. Carson, *Entrusted With The Gospel: Pastoral Expositions of 2 Timothy*. It is very practical and encouraging reading for anyone involved in pastoral ministry. In the preface (p. 9-10), Carson explains that the basis of the book comes from the 2009 National Conference of The Gospel Coalition.¹ The Conference consisted of nine addresses, with six of those addresses being based on the six chapters of 2 Timothy. Though all six chapters were written by different well-known pastors, there is a good flow to the book because it is all rooted in 2 Timothy.



The first chapter, by John Piper, is based on 2 Timothy 1:1-12. The main point that Piper makes in this section is that Timothy is to “keep feeding the white-hot flame of God’s gift – of unashamed courage to speak openly of Christ and to suffer for the gospel” (p. 12). Piper states that his main point is the burden of the entire book (pp. 17-18). He explains that we feed the flame through the grace that

is in Jesus, through the Word of God, and through the promise of life in Christ Jesus. I typically relish anything that John Piper writes, but I did not find his message as inspiring as usual. However, his point is well-made that, like Timothy, we are to fan into flame the gift of God to serve Him and the church.

The second chapter is presented by Philip Ryken and is based on 2 Timothy 1:13-2:13. Ryken really grabbed my interest when he says in his introduction, “There are times – maybe every week – when you wish that you could preach the same passage again and do it right” (p. 25). That really resonated with me! Ryken explains that the section of 2 Timothy that runs from 1:13 to 2:13 is unified by the apostle’s concern for faithfulness in Christian life and ministry, amidst all its sufferings.

¹ The Gospel Coalition is a fellowship deeply committed to renewing our faith in the gospel of Christ and to reforming our ministry practices to conform fully to the Scriptures. See their website at www.thegospelcoalition.org.

Ryken says that “a successful ministry is simply this – a faithful ministry, faithful to Jesus Christ in life and doctrine, and faithful in safe-keeping and living out his idol-destroying gospel” (p. 28). He gives an example of someone who was faithful in ministry, namely Onesiphorus, who 1) loved the men who preached God’s Word, 2) was courageous, and 3) was fruitful where he went.

Ryken gives three illustrations of faithful work: a soldier, an athlete and a farmer. He quotes J. N. D. Kelly’s summary that Christian leaders “should cut out of their lives anything, however good in itself, which is liable to deflect them from total service to Christ” (p. 38). I was very challenged by that remark. He exhorts us to remember Jesus Christ and the faithfulness of God. Philip Ryken’s message is interesting, easy to read, and extremely practical. His thoughts and applications follow the text naturally. This was my favorite chapter.

Mark Driscoll is the third contributor and his message is taken from 2 Timothy 2:14-26. Driscoll underscores the fact that problems will arise from within the church, and this will make it difficult for those in ministry leadership. He writes, “They [Paul and Timothy] were acutely aware of the various problems in local churches, but rather than standing at a distance to criticize the church, they threw themselves into the needs of churches and served tirelessly” (pp. 53-54). We meet Christians today who criticize the church but who do nothing to enhance her glory.

Driscoll explains that the church is made up of three kinds of people: 1) positives, 2) negatives and 3) neutrals, which is one way of categorizing people. He further explains:

Positives are people who do gospel-things in gospel-ways for gospel-reasons. . . . Negatives are people who do ungospel-things in ungospel-ways for ungospel-reasons. . . . Neutrals are Christians at varying stages of their sanctification who are not leaders but rather easily influenced followers. (pp. 57-61)

Because all three kinds of people are in the church, Driscoll says that we need to work at staying positive.

Mark Driscoll is extremely practical and helpful in his advice for pastors in dealing with difficulties that arise in the church. His message ends by outlining twenty marks of a positive ministry. Marks that I particularly noted were: 1) Positively emphasize what you are for, not what you’re against, 9) Positively rejoice that God rules the church, 13) Positively seek righteousness, faith, love, and peace with urgency, 17) Positively suffer patiently like Jesus, and 20) Positively use your energy to win converts, not arguments (pp. 64-88).² This chapter is well worth reading again.

² The numbers in this section correspond to the points that Driscoll made.

The fourth contributor is K. Edward Copeland. His message is taken from 2 Timothy 3:1-9 and is on pitfalls and parodies of gospel-centred ministry. Edwards reminds us that time is winding down. He writes, "Since Christ appeared we have been living in the last days". Edwards states that there will be troublesome people and difficult days to come. He says, "According to the text the last days will include seasons that will be difficult, troublesome, and hard to bear. . . . In the last days the center of all existence will be self instead of God. . . . They will love self to the point of deification" (pp. 92-93). Certainly, we see self-love to the point of deification in Canada.

Copeland exhorts us to get the facts of the gospel straight. He explains, "We have people giving opinions about what they think the news is. We have television personalities posing as reporters who twist, spin, interpret, and omit facts to further their own ideological agendas" (p. 97). He warns that we must not allow this type of mindset to infiltrate the church.

I really liked one of his last exhortations. He writes, "If you are a proclaimer of the gospel, you are on the winning side. Act like it. Why are you so distressed about who is in office? God is on the throne, and he is not up for reelection. Why are you so distressed about the lies propagated by evil men when you have the truth? Preach the truth. That's where the power to make a difference is" (pp. 101). I think that this is something we all need to take to heart!

While Copeland makes some good points, I thought this was the weakest chapter in the book. In my opinion, he goes overboard by using so many metaphors and illustrations that the power of the Word of God is lost. I found this extremely annoying.

Bryan Chapell's chapter deals with 2 Timothy 3:10-4:5, and his heading is "Preach The Word". Chapell contends that in order to preach the Word of God we must hear the voice of God. He says that God speaks to us in His Word and His Word is the Scriptures. He explains, "Because it is God-breathed, Scripture is God's very Word to us" (p. 109). Chapell mentions something that all pastors need to remember when he says that "the power is not in our eloquence or zeal but in the Word itself" (pp. 115).

Chapell also says that we should see the hand of God as we preach. He says that the Word releases us from the idolatry of self. He explains, "Whenever we become the judge of what the Bible should say. . . then we substitute our wisdom for God's" (p. 119). The Word also releases us from the isolation of self. Thus, the Word is transforming.

Chapell further explains that we will know the heart of God as we prepare to preach the Word. He writes, "If we will simply ask two questions of any passage – what does this text tell me about God and what does this text tell me about humanity – we will always discover redemptive truth glimmering" (p. 122). How true! He makes another excellent statement in this section, "*All Scripture is always revealing the voice, hand, and heart of God. And when you have the voice, hand, and heart of God, you have Jesus*" (p. 122). Wonderful!

The last contributor is J. Ligon Duncan, and he looks at 2 Timothy 4:6-22 with the theme “Finishing Well”. In his introduction, he exhorts pastors to “determine and commit yourself to read, re-read, live in, and pray the Pastoral Epistles of Paul. This is so important because the Pastorals give us apostolic instruction for life and ministry” (p. 125). This is very wise advice for pastors.

Duncan warns us about two errors that prevent the church from finishing well. He writes, “The first error claims that *if the church is going to be an effective witness to the world in its own time, then its message must change.*” And again, he says, “The second error . . . says we don’t need an updated message, . . . but *what we do need if we’re going to be really successful, if we’re really going to reach our world and our culture, are new methods*” (p. 126). The first error is committed by liberalism and the second by many evangelicals. This section is very thought provoking, especially concerning the methodology of evangelicals. Duncan says:

If we are calling people to come to Christ, deny themselves, take up their cross, and die daily and we adopt a methodology to “bring them in” that says “have it your way,” then our methods will utterly contradict our message. . . . James Montgomery Boice used to say, “What you win them by, you win them to.” (p. 129)

I found this very insightful and challenging!

Duncan exhorts us to cross the finish line. He says Paul is telling Timothy, “Do ministry with your eye on the finish line” (p. 137). He also states that if we are to finish well, we need to read good books. He quotes Spurgeon’s famous sermon, when he said:

The apostle says to Timothy . . . “Give thyself unto reading.” The man who never reads will never be read; he who never quotes will never be quoted. He who will not use the thoughts of other men’s brains, proves that he has no brains of his own. . . . We are quite persuaded that the very best way for you to be spending your leisure, is to be either reading or praying. (p. 139)

This is solid advice!

Duncan warns us that we may have to stand alone if we are to finish well. He explains, “Faithfulness in gospel-ministry is no guarantee that people will not oppose you and that fellow Christian workers won’t abandon you” (pp. 144-145). Duncan finishes his message by asking how Timothy [and pastors] could finish well. He answers by saying, “Not with his own resources but with the grace of God. Grace. His favor” (p. 148). I quite enjoyed Ligon Duncan’s chapter as he demonstrates a deep understanding of the Word and of the church of Jesus Christ and what we must do to finish well.

Entrusted With The Gospel ends with a General Index and a Scripture Index, which I greatly appreciated. I would highly recommend this book for all pastors to read. There is much wisdom, sound instruction, encouragement and warning in it to enable us to fight the good fight of the faith to the glory of God!

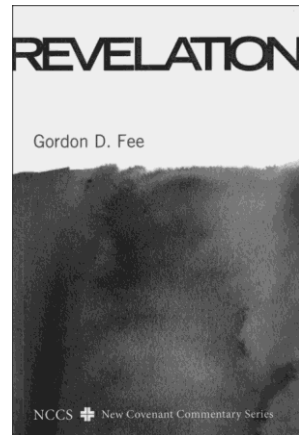
Reviewed by Ross Morrison

Revelation. Gordon D. Fee. New Covenant Commentary Series. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011, 332 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-60899-431-1

Any post-Enlightenment commentary on the Book of Revelation has the hard task of engaging a genre of literature that is more or less alien to the majority of contemporary society. Dr. Gordon Fee has made a notable contribution in this regard. His exegetical commentary is one in the New Covenant Commentary Series, edited by M. F. Bird and C. Keener, and is designed specifically to elucidate “the impact of the text upon the faith and praxis of contemporary faith communities”. Fee in his preface, invaluable to understanding his purpose, states that his intention is to help readers hear the Word of God and gain a sound theological understanding (p. ix). Specifically regarding the Book of Revelation, the reader should begin to comprehend the sovereignty of God and of His Christ in the universe and that this necessarily leads to worship. “John recognizes that truly Christian theology should lead to doxology” (p. x). Fee makes it clear from the outset that he will not document his interaction with other scholarly approaches (p. ix).

After a brief introduction, the book follows a regular commentary style. The material is arranged logically according to Fee’s “Outline of Revelation” (pp. vi-vii). The main work is annexed with a select bibliography and an index. The exegesis is astute yet non-technical and is highly readable, with a good comprehensibility provided by a notable balance of synthesis.

When introducing the material, Fee correctly states that Revelation, John’s Apocalypse, is the blending of “three kinds of literature – apocalypse, prophecy and letter – into a single whole piece” (p. xii). The Book of Revelation is characteristically apocalyptic yet differs on the two points of pseudonymity and concealment. John is clearly identified as the author of the work and its contents are not to be sealed up for a later time. The reason for this is the continuing presence of the Holy Spirit on earth with the body of believ-



ers. John is conveying the prophetic message of God as revealed in eschatological fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy for the edification of believers on the brink of persecution by the Roman Empire. Hence, reports Fee, Revelation is not only apocalyptic but also prophetic in genre. In addition, John's Apocalypse, according to Fee, is also a letter, and therefore it relates two important historically contextualizing matters. There exists an age-long Holy War in which believers are called to participate, one that will lead to their suffering prior to God's judgment. Fee states that these two themes, Holy War and suffering, are central and run throughout the book as keys to its understanding (pp. xv-xvi). In the introduction, Fee also deals with authorship as well as provenance. Since many popular writings have imposed fabricated eschatological schemes upon the Book of Revelation, he ends with an appropriate plea for "the necessity" of exegesis to undo misconceptions in exchange for a healthy interpretation of Revelation's contents.

As mentioned, Fee's exegesis is consistently well-balanced (keeping in view its purpose) and is not diverted by the speculative aspect of symbolism and representation as Fee recognizes that "the apocalyptic genre allows for a more fluid use of images" (p. 70).

A striking and welcome characteristic of Fee's commentary is the value and role of the Old Testament in John's Apocalypse for the purpose of interpretation. This is highlighted throughout as specific features in the text echo quotations, allude to stories and reflect typologies and symbols. Fee only suggests, however, what that text allows and does not force any connections. These then are related to immediate themes and the key themes of the book. For instance, John's vision of the throne in heaven (Rev. 4:1-6a) described as the source of thunder and lightning echoes Exodus 19:16-19 and so relates the two covenants to each other, unifies God's people and adds further substance to the theme of worship around the throne (p. 70). Another example is the first four angelic trumpets of seven at 8:6-13, which clearly echo Exodus 7:14-12:30 and the plagues sent upon Egypt and support the theme of God's judgment of the Empire and the salvation of His own people (pp. 121-126). These judgments are paralleled by the seven bowls of God's wrath contained in chapters fifteen to sixteen with the same Old Testament allusions to the plagues on Egypt (pp. 207-227). John describes Christ at 1:12-16 and 19:11-16 using allusions to Daniel 7 and 10, which fully exalts Jesus as Lord (pp. 15-18, 274-276). Importantly, the allusion to Leviticus 26:11-12 is a vital echo for Revelation chapter 21:1-8, the vision of the new heaven and new earth, for it brings into perspective the enduring purpose of the covenant: that God Himself will dwell with His believing people (p. 293).

Dr. Fee's synthesis of the material provides a helpful grid of interpretation. For instance, he states that the simultaneous visions of heaven and of earth are key to understanding the full import of chapters four to six (p. 66). Also, the seven seals, 6:1-8:5, Fee understands as the way John chose to convey the reason for God's later intervention (p. 91). Furthermore, Fee sees the

opening of the seals as an overture to “all the major themes that will appear” (p. 91), that is, “all the major themes of the ‘divine drama’ are here presented in a sequential way through the four horsemen, the martyrs, and finally the earthquake. The rest of the book will provide the actual drama that spells out the story” (p. 91). At the more “puzzling point” of the two agricultural harvest metaphors, chapter fourteen in John’s Apocalypse, Fee again offers a synthesis of the material and draws the chapter into relation with the salient elements of the rest of the book for the purpose of clarification. Fee recognizes that “contextually one can make very good sense of the overall structure of the book by seeing these two corresponding visions as a deliberate prelude” (p. 200) to the judgment on Rome and the descent of the heavenly Jerusalem. Read in this way, Fee points out that a chiasmic ABBA structure governs the material, initially the negative element, AB (demise of Rome and last battle/end of evil), followed by the positive element, BA (new Jerusalem and renewal of all things) (pp. 200-201, 207-306). This reading provides a meaning that is based on the structural integrity of the material. This is a good indication of solid exegesis. Again this highlights the main themes touched on throughout, that is, the sovereignty of God and His Christ, God’s inescapable and righteous judgment, and the promise of salvation long awaited.

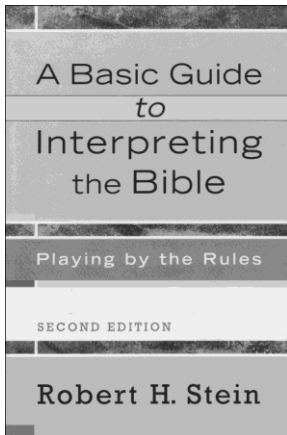
The approach taken in this commentary on John’s Apocalypse has invested exegetical effort in particularly inner-biblical and literary-structural areas and has thereby yielded very astute hermeneutical results. Fee’s commentary provides a valuable bridge between a distillation of ongoing academic discussion and the community of faith. He is rightly called by Prof. D. A. deSilva a “master exegete”. Without a doubt, pastors, teachers and the laity alike should utilize this volume.

Reviewed by Frank Z. Kovács

***A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible: Playing by the Rules*, second ed. Robert H. Stein. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011, 228 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8010-3373-5**

In the preface to the first edition, included in the second, Stein indicates his chief aim is to provide “in a nontechnical way a text that will help the reader understand what the goal of reading the Bible should be and how this goal can be achieved” (p. ix). Although academic density has been removed, this does not diminish the value of Stein’s work, which serves as the hermeneutic text for several graduate and undergraduate programs (p. viii) and provides guidance for biblical interpretation for God’s Church.

Stein follows the traditional pattern of describing the accepted rules for biblical interpretation before presenting genre specific guidelines via case studies in the book's later chapters. Interestingly, he does not use the term "historical-grammatical" (even though this is the method he advocates) to describe the preferred method of interpreting the Bible; instead, he opts to



concentrate on terms such as author-centred, text-centred and reader-centred. Stein's choice of vocabulary is perfectly acceptable. However, it may cause readers familiar with more advanced academic works a bit of time to adjust to his orientation. Where the book shines is in the second chapter, where he gives detailed definitions to words like meaning, implication, significance, understanding and interpretation (pp. 30-55). Stein presents the well-known Bible study scenario in which discussion degenerates with people saying, "What does this passage mean to me?" (p. 1) He indicates that the biblical author had one intended meaning, but there are multiple implications to the passage.

This principle is well explained, and the book's second chapter alone is of value for setting the ground rules of biblical interpretation encountered in any seminary or Bible study.

The book's second part provides explanations and scriptural examples to help readers to gain experience in reading and identifying the Bible's one meaning and multiple implications. Stein calls biblical genres "games" and outlines rules of interpretation for ten styles of biblical writing. It is at this point that the book's brevity (only 208 pages) and the conscious avoidance of non-technical language limits the depth with which the book can be used. For example, the chapter on Hebrew poetry totals fourteen pages, which can only serve as an introduction to the parallelism.

Robert H. Stein, retired professor of New Testament Interpretation at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, has spent his entire career teaching students to read, study and interpret the Bible with honesty and integrity to the author's intended meaning. This book is an excellent update of his earlier edition. It will work well as an introduction to biblical interpretation at the lay level and can be used as an introductory text to hermeneutics at the college level with the addition of suitable practice and explanatory material.

Reviewed by Steven C. Adamson, adjunct professor of church history at Ligonier Academy, Orlando, Florida as well as its dean of distance learning. He is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in historical apologetics at Highland Theological College, Scotland.



***Biblical Greek: A Compact Guide.* William D. Mounce. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011, 212 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-310-32606-9**

William Mounce is perhaps the best recognized name in biblical Greek studies today. He has generated several Greek language introductions and workbooks, all with a distinctively student-friendly character. His latest contribution to the field is his diminutive, yet thorough, “mini-grammar”.

Mounce’s intention is to place a helpful tool into the hands of Greek students, in particular, those who have finished their first year of *koine* Greek. He has sensed, correctly, I think, the need for a handy review grammar for those who are now embarking upon more advanced study. Surprisingly complete in its scope (even boasting a lexicon!), the grammar can serve as an on-the-go resource for translation work and personal study. Although primarily designed for student use, the concise, well-organized volume also fills a pedagogical gap for teachers who include a summary review at the onset of the second-year studies.

The *Guide* delivers, first of all, good value to the student. In a day when even the flimsiest paperback (especially in biblical studies!) may tickle the \$30 mark, this little volume represents a welcome bargain at \$9.99 (US). It is well bound and sharply printed on quality paper. It comes complete with a heavy vinyl slipcover, which will protect it from the real-life tumble of rucksack/computer bag transport. Its small size makes it a svelte passenger, even in a top shirt pocket. The marketing department did their homework.

The book’s organization is intuitive. It begins with brief discussions of the many particles of the Greek language, those small building blocks that surround the larger clusters of noun and verb use and morphology. Here Mounce gives complete charts and lists to aid the student. The next main section discusses the Greek noun, highlighting the logic of case usage. Once again, the treatment is brief yet complete with easy-to-decipher charts. Verbal systems and syntax are left for the end and account for the lion’s share of material. The *Guide* is organized, then, not only in terms of logical clusters of information but also in terms of complexity. The organization makes sense for both simple reference and teaching sequence, reflecting Mounce’s acquaintance with both classroom and subject matter. Well done.

In sum, Mounce’s *Compact Guide* is a tidy piece of work, representing value and functionality for students, pastors and teachers. Good things do indeed come in small packages!

Reviewed by James P. Hering

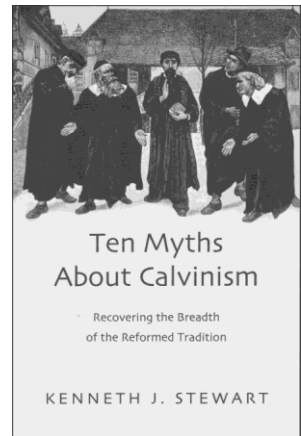
Systematic Theology

***Ten Myths About Calvinism: Recovering the Breadth of the Reformed Tradition.* Kenneth J. Stewart. Downer's Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011, 300 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8308-3898-1**

"Who speaks for John Calvin?" was a question I raised in my biography of Stanford Reid, that evangelical Calvinist in the academy. Seven years later, having recently celebrated the five-hundredth anniversary of the birth of the Reformer, the real John Calvin is being cited by a wide swath of interpreters. All this buzz as the so-called "young, restless, and Reformed" crowd remind us that John Calvin is still a figure to conjure with, his influence and impact greater than ever.

Enter the debate Ken Stewart, a professor at Covenant College, Chattanooga, and a former minister of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. His recently published (by InterVarsity Press, no less) *Ten Myths About Calvinism* responds to a widespread concern as to what John Calvin really taught. The subtitle tells it all: "Recovering the Breadth of the Reformed Tradition." Stewart has little truck with doctrinaire Calvinists of a narrow variety, any more than he can tolerate the broadening of Calvin wannabees who make him into a twenty-first century guru for their favourite foibles.

He starts with "Four Myths Calvinists Should Not Be Circulating (But Are)." The four are basic to Calvin mythology, aided and abetted by his so-called followers. From his knowledge of subsequent developments in Geneva (in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries), where Stewart is an expert, he extrapolates a scenario that is balanced and realistic. He places Calvin in the context of the other Reformers, as he also spells out the realities of a conflicted Geneva that took a long time even to make Calvin a citizen. A balanced chapter on the place of predestination in Calvin's thinking is a convincing riposte to those who, like the political economists Weber and Tawney, think predestination is the sum and substance of Calvinism. He convincingly demonstrates that the acronym "T-U-L-I-P" is a late (and inadequate)



summary of Reformed doctrine. And a trenchant chapter on Calvinism and revivals is one of the best things I have read on the subject.

Throughout the book Stewart uses a wide range of material. The footnotes – mercifully immediately below – are almost as valuable as the main body of the text. He does not adhere to a “True Reformed canon.” Boettner’s *Reformed Doctrine of Predestination* and the writings of David Steele and Curtis Thomas are critically (but appreciatively) examined, while recent writers such as Graeme Murdock, Elsie Anne McKee and Jane Dempsey Douglass make a contribution to the dialogue. Stewart is phenomenally well-read and provides many fascinating details as he gives the Calvin story a broad-brush treatment.

The “Six Myths Non-Calvinists Should Not Be Circulating (But Are)” are, predictably, that Calvinism is anti-missionary, antinomian, leads to fascism, deadens the creative arts, resists gender equality, and (as in South Africa) fosters racial inequality. In all of these misrepresentations, Stewart is fair in representing two sides of the issue – sometimes almost overstating the anti-Calvinist position for the sake of argument – and irenic, admitting sometimes that Calvinists have not always been the best representatives of their own position and have done considerable harm to their position by extremism.

A final summary chapter, “Recovering Our Bearings: Calvinism in the Twenty-First Century,” a paper that Stewart gave at Dordt College, might perhaps have been saved for a whole volume on its own, though its inclusion here has obvious benefits. It is an unusual backward view of the interpretation of Calvin from the twenty-first century, in stages, to the French Revolution. By starting with the current Calvin renaissance among twenty-somethings and working through the past two hundred years, it traces the genealogy of Calvin’s groupies in a way that makes each generation responsive to the previous one, history turned on its head.

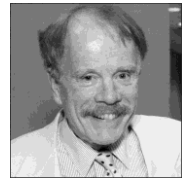
This book would be useful for a college-age or university educated study group. The questions and the suggested readings at the end of each chapter stimulate reflection and raise serious issues. The book assumes a degree of historical sophistication and theological acumen which is perhaps more common in the UK and the United States, particularly in the south. Canadian students in secondary schools, with a deplorable lack of gripping history instruction usually coloured by political correctness, might be at a loss to grasp some of the majestic sweep of Stewart’s quick summary statements of major historical issues over the centuries.

But for anyone who recognizes the importance of the historical as a way of discerning the issues that confront the church today, this is invaluable reading. And much of it represents a call to recover in our churches today – and particularly those in the Reformed tradition – the stupendous but balanced achievement of John Calvin. So much of what Stewart writes is beautifully crafted and nuanced. The chapter about Calvinism and revivals should be on the agenda of every Christian community today, as should his state-

ment on the place of law in the life of the believer. His balanced comments about gender equality may cause some ripples, but it is eminently fair to all sides of a controverted issue and represents Calvin well.

It is gratifying to know that since the book appeared in early 2011 sales have been brisk. It has been an offering of InterVarsity Press' "Book-of-the-Month" club, which encourages one about the recent state (and depth) of that publisher's book list. Theological seminaries could do worse than use it as an introductory text in either church history or systematics courses. It is hoped other theological schools will follow their example. These are all grounds for encouragement. Perhaps even in Canada Christians will address some of these concerns – which are not limited to Calvinists alone – and in doing so, provide ballast for a church that too often has lost its historical moorings and has found itself sinking in a morass of subjectivity and "feel good" religion.

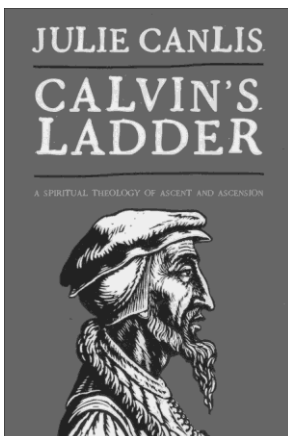
Reviewed by A. Donald MacLeod. Don MacLeod is research professor of Church History at Tyndale Seminary. He recently was the recipient of a D.D., this time from Westminster Seminary, Philadelphia. He is a widely published writer and biographer, including W. Stanford Reid: An Evangelical Calvinist in the Academy.



***Calvin's Ladder: A Spiritual Theology of Ascent and Ascension.*
Julie Canlis. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010, 286 pp., paper.
ISBN 978-0-8028-6449-9**

Those who have read and studied Calvin's thought have long wondered if there is a central doctrine at the heart of his Christian theology. While many Christians hold to the popularly-accepted view that predestination lies at the centre of his theology, no serious Calvin scholar today accepts this. The more likely candidate for a central doctrine in Calvin's theology is the person and work of Jesus Christ. Calvin scholars such as Alister E. McGrath, Ronald S. Wallace, and Charles Partee have argued that this lies at the heart of his systematic and practical theology.

The recent book by Julie Canlis confirms the centrality of Christology for Calvin by focusing on his spiritual theology and praxis. Her thesis is that fellowship with the triune God through our participation in Christ by the power of the Spirit is at the centre of the Christian faith for Calvin. This is because it is at the centre of



the biblical teaching on the Christian life. This doctrine is found throughout church history, from early church fathers, such as Irenaeus and Augustine, to later theologians, such as Thomas Aquinas.

The title of this book highlights the fact that for Calvin the Christian life consists of believers' union with the Son via His participation in our humanity through His incarnation, and our participation in the benefits of His redemptive work culminating in His ascension. Canlis notes that Calvin synthesizes the two movements of descent and ascent into one activity. As God, the Son, has come as a man (in His descent) to take our place, so He also leads us back to the Father (in His ascent) so that we may have communion with God. This participatory communion is not merely the goal of the Christian life, but also the means of living this life in the present age.

Canlis argues that Calvin's use of the concept of participation [*koinonia*] is "biblical, rigorous, coherent, and has a surprising amount of muscular flex" (p. 11). In order to enjoy the life of Christ, believers must be engrafted into Him. This is not accomplished through human effort but by the powerful working of the Holy Spirit. Human life as God meant it to be is thoroughly pneumatological, and thus relational, in that it requires the work of the Spirit to draw us into the Trinitarian fellowship in Christ. Yet, in his exposition Calvin maintains the distinction between the divine and the human. It is in Christ, Who has descended to our humanity and ascended back to the Father, that we receive fellowship with the divine life without embracing human deification. We remain creatures and God remains God, but we find our true identities in our communion with Him.

In chapter one, Canlis gives a brief historical overview of the concept of ascent and participation from classical Greek philosophy to medieval scholasticism. She notes that the Platonic view of participation involves ontological monism and the soul's flight from the material world to the divine realm. Although the early church fathers, such as Origen and Augustine, attempt to break with this pagan thought, they incorporate some aspects of this into their theology. Even Aquinas views the soul's ascent to God as an innate capacity, not necessarily requiring Christ.

Calvin broke with the medieval synthesis of pagan and Christian thought by making Christ central and necessary for our restoration to God. Rather than viewing Christ as One Who strengthens our innate abilities to rise to God, Calvin understands Christ as the necessary mediator between us and God. He does what we cannot, so that through our participation in Him by the power of the Spirit, we might join in Christ's ascent to fellowship with the Father.

Chapter two deals with creation and participation. For Calvin communion with God is the foundation of creaturely existence. All creation is related to God through the mediation of the Son by the power of the Spirit. Since the world is made by God and dependent on Him for its existence, the notion of participation denies any notion of absolute independence for creatures. The biblical teaching that Christ is the firstborn over all creation (Col. 1:15) es-

establishes Him as both the foundation and orientation of creation. The meaning of all things, including human identity (*imago Dei*) and life, is found only by participation in Christ. Specifically, the notion of the image of God in humans cannot be seen as merely as endowment of humanity, but must also be understood as a relationship. Given this notion of creaturely participation, Canlis shows that for Calvin the fall into sin breaks the communion with God. This results in a loss of our proper identity and orientation and that of all of creation.

In chapter three Canlis presents Calvin's understanding of the Son's incarnation as opening up our participation in God by the power of the Spirit. The Trinitarian economy of salvation is focused on the person of Christ, which encompasses His life of obedience and His death on the cross. His ascension into heaven reaffirms both His rule over creation and His intercession for His people. We are united to Christ, not by our own efforts, but by the power of the Spirit so that we might once again experience the fullness of delight that God intended for us in creation. For Calvin the goal of our salvation is "our *koinonia* with the Father, through Christ, in the Spirit" (p. 118).

Chapter four deals with various aspects of the Christian life as a life of communion with God. First, it is a life of discipleship in which we live in communion with God, and we are given the mission of calling others back into this communion. Second, it is a life of adoption, where our participation in the communion of the Father and the Son prompts us to call out to God as "Father." Canlis notes the centrality of adoption for Calvin's theology. Adoption ties the benefits of salvation to believers' union with Christ via participation in the Spirit. When adoption is diminished (as has been the case in some articulations of Reformed theology), the Spirit tends to be depersonalized, becoming merely a bridge to receiving the redemptive merits of Christ. Calvin keeps the benefits of Christ bound to His person, so that the work of the Spirit consists of bringing the church to live in Christ.

Canlis claims that Calvin's emphasis on ascent and participation are most celebrated in his theology of the Lord's Supper (p. 159). God comes to us so that we might have communion with Him as we participate in Christ. The Eucharist does not create a new reality, and certainly does not bring Christ's body down to us, but it seals all the benefits of salvation which we have in Christ.

In chapter five Canlis presents Irenaeus' theology of ascent. She is not arguing for a relationship between his and Calvin's understanding of participation, but she wants to establish that there is a similarity in the way that they develop a distinctively biblical theology of human participation in the Trinitarian life. Irenaeus forges his doctrine over against both the Gnostic denial of the goodness of creation and the Stoic claim of secular self-sufficiency. Although his theology has different opponents than Calvin, his affirmation is the same: that human fulfillment is found in union with the triune God by

means of participation in Christ by the power of the Spirit. Our ascent to God is made possible by God's descent to us in the incarnation of the Word.

Canlis' concluding chapter draws upon the theological insights of both Irenaeus and Calvin to emphasize the central importance of the doctrine of participation in Christ. No matter which cultural pressures the church faces nor which heresies it confronts, this doctrine is at the heart of all systematic theology. Canlis recapitulates this by noting the common moves made by both Calvin and Irenaeus in the three key doctrines: the goodness of creation and of human creatures when viewed as participating in God, Christ as the mediator for this participation both in creation and in the re-creation His redemption accomplished, and the church as the institution created by God to disciple believers into their creaturely life of communion with God as directed toward the eschatological reality found in the ascended Christ.

In my view, this is the best exposition yet on the centrality of Christ for Calvin's theology and for all Christian theology. Canlis has done a careful and thorough job of showing the Trinitarian and Christocentric nature of Calvin's thought. These themes are both brought together in the doctrine of participation – communion with the Father, by participation in the Son, through the power of the Spirit. Since I consider so much of Calvin's theology thoroughly biblical, this book also unfolds the central place of both doctrines in Christian thought and spiritual life. I find Canlis' exposition especially helpful in the following areas: the importance of Christ's mediation to understand correctly the nature and goal of creation and humanity, the importance of our adoption in Christ as central for understanding all facets of salvation, and the nature of the Lord's Supper as sealing our participation in Christ by the Spirit.

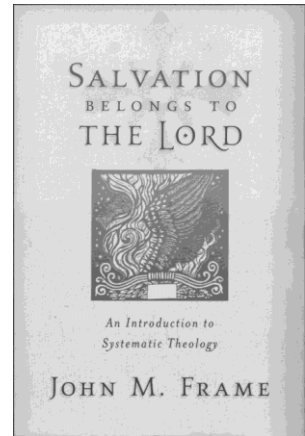
While I have some quibbles with some details of the book, overall it is a feast for those wanting to learn from the theology of our Reformed forefather but also for those seeking enrichment in the theology of Christian life in general. The book is a challenging read, but for students, pastors and teachers who persevere, it will yield a rich harvest of great value for theological insight and spiritual formation.

Reviewed by Guenther ("Gene") H. Haas, professor of Religion and Theology, Redeemer University College, Ancaster, Ontario and the author of The Concept of Equity in Calvin's Ethics (1997). Dr. Haas is a minister of the Presbyterian Church in America.



***Salvation Belongs to the Lord: An Introduction to Systematic Theology.* John M. Frame. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2006, 382 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-59638-018-9¹**

John Frame has certainly been one of America's prolific authors in the field of systematic theology. His *The Doctrine of God* garnered the Gold Medallion Award from the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association and belongs to his series of four volumes in his Theology of Lordship series. Frame has also written on apologetics, Cornelius Van Til and worship. Generally speaking, as a writer Frame endeavours to interact with Scripture, traditional Reformed formulations of theology and the world of today. His effort to take seriously our time and place in history is evidenced by what and how he writes and interacts with subjects.



Salvation Belongs to the Lord has emerged as the expanded print form from the Institute of Theological Studies (ITS) course “Foundations of Systematic Theology” produced in 2004 by John Frame. This is an excellent course and certainly one of the finest theological courses made available by ITS, Grand Rapids, now Christiancourses.com. Frame tells us in the preface (p. ix) that this particular book is not actually part of the volumes in his Theology of Lordship series, which are aimed at treating some of the *loci* of theology at an in-depth level. Nonetheless, *Salvation Belongs to the Lord* operates thematically under Frame’s organizational centre of lordship and has similar stylistic elements of approach – “exegetical, Reformed and focused on the lordship of God and of Jesus Christ. As in the Lordship books, three-fold distinctions abound here [normative, existential and situational], some that you won’t find elsewhere” (pp. ix-x).

The book is aimed for “college or seminary level” study and is to be for “beginners in theology, people who are seeking a basic introduction” (p. x). My own assessment is that, yes, it could be used at select seminaries, but as for “college”, I think it depends on what one means by “college”, some yes and some no. Personally I do not consider it as easy going as J. I. Packer’s *Concise Theology*² or now an older work, Bruce Milne’s *Know the Truth*³ or

¹ I am grateful to William Dunlop of Westminster Theological College, Uganda for first exposing me to this new text and kindly giving a copy to me.

² J. I. Packer, *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1993).

³ Bruce Milne, *Know the Truth: A handbook of Christian belief* (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1982).

T. C. Hammond's *In Understanding Be Men*⁴. True, Frame has used a much more conversational style – it is unique to find the first person singular used in a work of systematic theology.

Frame has chosen to begin his first chapter with “God, the Lord” rather than with Scripture. The chapter does have a Van Tillian ring about it for sure, and it clearly develops the author’s theme of Lordship Theology. From there he proceeds to “God as Three in One”, then in chapters four and five to the subject of Scripture. I did find it curious that the subject of “infallibility” is not discussed but only the concept of “inerrancy” (pp. 67-68). Here I would make one suggestion for a future edition of this work. A brief glossary of terms at the back of the book would help beginners with some language and terminology and perhaps allow the author not to “clutter” his text unnecessarily if that were his choice. I do not believe this would have added significantly to the work’s overall size. Chapter six, “What is Theology?”, comes at a very unusual juncture. Frame clearly addresses this placement order and provides his rationale (pp. 72-73). As a professor, I am not convinced and would likely have my students begin with chapter six if this were a class text. I completely concur with Frame, “You have to be a good exegete to be a good biblical and systematic theologian, but the opposite is also the case: you must be a good systematic theologian to be a good exegete or biblical theologian” (p. 82). Amen!

Chapters seven through twelve cover familiar *loci* of theology: “Man, the Image of God”, “Sin and Evil”, “God’s Covenants”, “Who Is Jesus Christ?”, “What did Jesus Do?” and “The Holy Spirit”. They are helpful and very engaging. I think it was particularly helpful to title chapters ten and eleven as questions and then answer them. The chapter on the Holy Spirit (pp. 159-171) is written in a most irenic manner and actually shows honesty and relevance to the realities of studying theology in the twenty-first century, unlike many of the older works which appear “time bound”.

Part two of *Salvation Belongs to the Lord* contains thirteen chapters, beginning with “Election, Calling, and Regeneration”. Here Frame tackles the theme of *ordo salutis* or “subjective soteriology” in an even-handed “senior level” theological text. There is a great clarity in his writing here in a short compass. He concludes the section on “regeneration” with a beautiful statement: “When people’s lives are changed from disobeying God, we can know, though not infallibly, that the Spirit has been at work, giving new birth” (p. 187).

Mention should be made of the chief confessional and catechetical sources which Frame incorporates into his chapters. The largest number of

⁴ T. C. Hammond, *In Understanding Be Men: A Handbook on Christian Doctrine for Non-Theological Students*, orig. 1936 (London: Inter-Varsity, 1952, 4th ed.). See also Louis Berkhof’s *Systematic Theology*, 1932, 1938, 1996, which in its many editions has served numerous theological colleges and seminaries around the world as a primary theological textbook. Also the briefer work by Berkhof, *Summary of Christian Doctrine*, 1938.

such citations are to the Westminster Confession and Catechisms (almost twenty such references), then a few references to Chalcedon, Nicaea, Dordt, Heidelberg and the Second Helvetic. Clearly Frame sees value in using Westminster to illumine the *loci* he is writing about. Under chapter fifteen, “Justification and Adoption”, Frame incorporates the brilliant Westminster Larger Catechism definition of justification and the same for adoption (pp. 201, 205). He then proceeds to explain such and incorporates judicious biblical reference and support. On occasion he also makes reference to theological writers, generally referring to conservative Reformed writers, with obvious appreciation to John Murray but also others on occasion, such as Roger Nicole. Frame will also interact negatively with others for teaching purposes, such as Friedrich Schleiermacher. The pages are not covered with endless quotations or references to theologians; rather, he practises great restraint and selectivity.

Of particular interest to me were chapters eighteen through twenty-one, which deal with ecclesiology or the doctrine of the church. Frame is willing to develop theological writing with a certain perceptive, creative edge, yet he is ever respectful of the classical world of Reformed systematic theology. I believe he helps to develop very positively the whole discussion of the marks of the church in a very wholistic manner. Readers will find that he incorporates missional vocabulary (p. 253) and explores the subject of the means of grace with a very broad perspective (perhaps a slight indebtedness here to Wayne Grudem). His selection on prayer under the means of grace is very powerful (pp. 267-273) and surely worthy of specific study and reflection; I believe it is one of the finest brief theological treatments I have read on prayer. Under the mode and subjects of baptism, Frame presents the various perspectives and states his own personal positions. Yet at the same time, he offers a new Reformed and ecumenical conclusion that is in keeping with his book *Evangelical Reunion*⁵.

Frame’s second to last chapter, “How Then Shall We Live?”, is an attempt to return ethics and theology to be studied together. He sees this was done by Calvin in the *Institutes* and in many of the great Reformed catechisms. Frame asserts, “All theology *is* ethics” (p. 315). This chapter is not a specific ethical study list, for example, capital punishment, abortion, etc., but rather points to the large theological framework. Surely this approach is in order in an introductory text.

Salvation Belongs to the Lord: An Introduction to Systematic Theology is a most helpful introductory text to use in teaching systematic theology within the conservative and evangelical community. If used in colleges, it will need to be carefully assessed as to the specific college setting and college-level training being undertaken. The book has an irenic tone throughout. It has an abundance of Scriptures to study, and it will introduce the readers to some

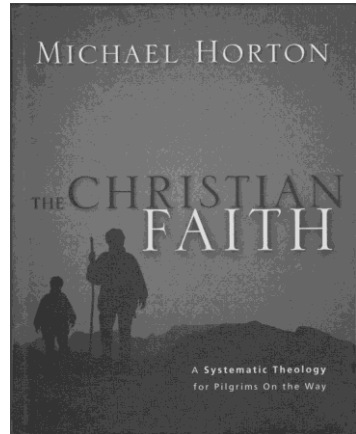
⁵ John M. Frame, *Evangelical Reunion* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991).

classical theological formulations. The Scripture, subject and name indices are helpful as are the suggestions for “Further Reading”. A user-friendly glossary, as I have already noted, would be appreciated. The writing style is engaging and shows depth of reflection.

Reviewed by Jack C. Whytock

***The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way.* Michael Horton. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011, 1052 pp., hc. ISBN 978-0-310-28604-2**

Michael Horton is a talented theologian and communicator, able to write for those with delicate digestive systems, as well as for the more robustly constituted. This one-volume, one thousand-odd paged systematic theology is somewhere in the middle of the field. Effort had been made to make it accessible – tables, snappy headlines, a buoyant, cheerful style, the inclusion of questions for discussion – but the treatment of some of the issues will on occasion provoke puzzlement, and appreciation of nearly all of them requires a good bit of prior knowledge and understanding. This is hardly avoidable.



Horton emphasises, as many do at present, the importance of not neglecting narrative, salvation history and theodrama. Reading this, I rather feared for the worst. But I needn't have. There is a five-chapter introduction, having to do with method and approach. Here Horton makes it clear that he is wedded to the biblical category of the covenant as the fundamental theological theme, together with the Calvinian theme of the knowledge of God. Scripture is “covenant canon”. This, at least, serves to anchor his material in an overarching biblical idea.

In Reformed theology there has been and still is some tension between covenant theology and a more logical and metaphysical approach, between Cocceius and Voetius, say. I reckon that Horton does a fair job in mediating between these approaches, or at least masking where each leads to if left untethered to the other. It's hard to tell whether his heart is with Cocceius and his head with Voetius, or the other way around. The general outlook of the book, in which the proposal is that the several *loci* of systematic theology be treated covenantally, suggests Cocceius, but the way the *loci* come together, a fairly conventional way it has to be said, one in which we soon find ourselves discussing divine simplicity and the communicable and incommunica-

ble attributes of God, suggests Voetius. Maybe the voice is Cocceius's voice, but the hands are of Voetius.

Nevertheless, this emphasis on covenant, and its consequences for systematic theology, requires a more thorough treatment than Horton gives it. The link section, "The Nature of Doctrine: from Scripture to System", is disappointing, because the author considers not that but "From Scripture to Doctrine", and the question of what makes a set of doctrines systematic is left dangling in the air. Obviously the idea of the covenant does not do the trick here. For systematic theology differs from redemptive history, but Horton does not allow himself to tell us how. Is what makes systematic theology systematic simply the intelligibility and coherence of that history? Or is it some deeper coherence, something stronger than logical consistency but weaker than logical deducibility or mutual entailment, an organic connectedness? I do not think that Horton gives us an answer. Odd that, writing a book with "systematic theology" in the title and not telling the reader what the title means.

The covenantal impetus that the treatment of the doctrinal topics receives obviously works better in some cases than others. In the case of the doctrine of God it hardly works at all, nor ought we to expect it to, given Horton's emphatic endorsement of the divine freedom. The same may be said of the treatment of the lineaments of the God-man, or the ordering of the divine decrees. But of course it works well with the incarnation, the *ordo salutis*, and the church and sacraments.

So after the first five chapters, the other twenty-four of the work are so many doctrinal essays, arranged in a fairly conventional way, frequently employing the covenant motif, but with no underlying rationale for the whole. Horton's style is to work from the exegetical foundations of a doctrine, keeping his eye on the history of theology, weighted in favour of Calvin and the Reformed Orthodox, and more of Hodge than of Shedd, and on contemporary theologians from Kline and Vos through Gunton to such as Jenson, Moltmann and Pinnock. He weaves together numerous quotes from these and a wider variety of other present-day sources in both illustrative and authority-conferring ways, in the familiar North American manner. One cannot but admire the industry and determination evident in all of this.

I'd say that the result is a pretty reliable and an appealing treatment of Reformed theology. There are things that occasionally cause the eyebrow to rise, but I'm certainly not going to bare the teeth of any toothcomb in order to nit pick over what is here, or to pontificate about and lament over what might have been but isn't. Instead I thought it might be worth reflecting on two or three general questions which considering Horton's work have prompted.

Horton's habit of citing from a wide range of contemporary theological authors has been mentioned. Many other conservative writers do the same. The practice has strengths and weaknesses. Horton makes clear, in some cas-

es, points of disagreement as well as of agreement. I suspect that the practice is not reciprocated, though I've done no research on this. His procedure shows generosity and catholicity of spirit, and echoes the important Reformed theme that truth is God's truth wherever it may be found. But the dangers for the unwary or untutored are obvious. And there's a connected consequence. I suspect that the number of Horton's very contemporary citations will date the book sooner than if he had concentrated more exclusively on the classic, primary theological texts, catholic and reformed, those that are formative and have stood the test of time.

There is a further linked point that is also of interest. I think that it is fair to say that Horton writes in the same voice, in the same key and register, no matter what he is discussing. There is never a suggestion that he might be surer of the grounding and intelligibility of some doctrines rather than others, that some are clearer than others, more difficult than others, more puzzling, more speculative, harder to swallow, more inherently mysterious than others. But to adopt this uniform approach seems to depart from the normal patterns of human belief, in which some beliefs are more confidently held than others, some more central in the web of belief, some more peripheral. On this matter, Horton's mentor John Calvin seems to have a rather different, somewhat mixed approach, though I am not suggesting that it was intentional. In the *Institutes* and many of his doctrinal and polemical works he seems utterly confident, a kind of one man Reformed magisterium, (frankly, a know-all), while in his exegetical remarks in the commentaries he frequently offers alternative readings, expresses doubts about what a passage may mean, marginally preferring one interpretation over another, and so on. If systematic theologians like Calvin and Horton are human too, ought not their products to be contoured in a more human way? If some doctrines are hard to be understood, and some hard to take, why not say this and say why?

A final general comment. Horton's systematic theology, like many another's, is very much an intramural product, consisting of lots of conversations among exclusively Christian theologians. The general features or movements of current culture only merit discussion insofar as they have been taken up by or unconsciously reflected in the published work of members of the guild. As far as I can see the numerous works in systematic theology recently produced among conservative theologians (Grudem, Frame, Reymond, Kelly and now Horton) all seem to play on the same field and in more or less the same way, so that while we all may have our favourite, there is, frankly, little to choose between them, except depth of pocket or size of shelf. Is this, a kind of Theological Correctness, what contributes to the feeling of many that systematic theology is inherently dull? I hazard the hope that when the present cycle of systematic theology writing has run its course, the next cycle, while thoroughly conservative in orientation, will be wider, broader, more expansive, allowing some genuine, substantive differences of opinion and so, if nothing else, widening consumer choice.

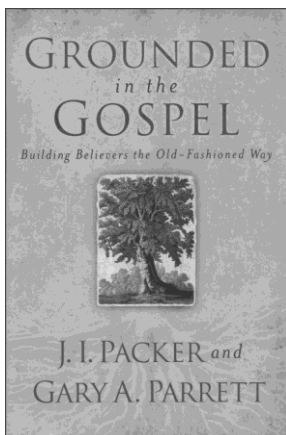
Perhaps such a change will be forced on new authors whether they like it or not. Ought not a modern systematic theology to engage with Islam? (The word is not in the index of Horton's book.) "Do Christians and Muslims worship the same God?" "Christian providence or Muslim fate?" I wonder how Michael Horton's overarching theme, the theme of covenant, would work when considered in the company of the other "Abrahamic religions"?

Reviewed by Paul Helm and reprinted by permission of the author and also the editor for www.reformation21.org. Helm is a teaching fellow at Regent College, British Columbia and resides in the United Kingdom.



***Grounded in the Gospel: Building Believers the Old-Fashioned Way.* J. I. Packer and Gary A. Parrett. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010, 238 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8010-6838-6**

J. I. Packer of Regent College and one of his former students Gary Parrett, professor of educational ministries and worship at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, have joined forces to produce a rationale or manual for implementing a comprehensive program of catechesis in the local church. They define catechesis as "the church's ministry of grounding and growing God's people in the Gospel and its implications for doctrine, devotion, duty, and delight" (p.182). *Grounded in the Gospel* is a call for renewed commitment to catechesis, for, "Where wise catechesis has flourished, the church has flourished. Where it has been neglected, the church has floundered" (p. 184).



They begin with a survey of the biblical basis for catechesis and go on to discuss various aspects of catechetical instruction. Packer and Parrett value input from church history and thus survey catechetical practices in the Ancient, Reformation and Puritan periods. The authors are particularly concerned with what is taught and provide a thorough discussion of the content and structure of a catechesis programme – the goal being to proclaim Christ. They also provide a helpful perspective on various aspects of the "how" of effective catechizing.

The book does an excellent job of making clear the gospel is the beginning and the end of catechesis. It also makes clear that instruction involves the implications and applications of the gospel for sound doctrine, a Christ-like lifestyle and a vital relationship with the living God. They are concerned

with content and process. They write, “Being really and truly serious, and tenacious, about substantive content must be matched by equal concern and endeavor for sound educational process, the stimulating of critical thought and the formation of discerning powers of judgment” (pp. 76-77). They consider it wise to learn from past catechetical practice but insist that it must have a contemporary relevance. Catechesis must discern and relate to the competing counter-catechesis of the culture that is at work in the lives of congregants.

The authors summarize the issues and insights discussed throughout the book in a proposal for structuring and implementing ministries of catechesis in local evangelical churches. In overview the model consists of three stages. “Procatechesis” is an introduction to Christianity for inquirers or seekers. “Catechesis Proper” is concerned with formal grounding in the gospel and is focused on the Apostles’ Creed, the Decalogue and the Lord’s Prayer. “On-going Catechesis” is concerned with further growth in the gospel. Their desire is not so much that readers will adopt their insights and implement their model, but that they will stir up interest in and implementation of catechetical ministries as a vital component in renewing and strengthening today’s church.

Grounded in the Gospel stimulates thoughtful reflection on the various aspects of the church’s educational ministry and thus serves as a helpful resource for anyone developing a comprehensive programme to train and equip followers of Christ.

Reviewed by Howard M. McPhee, the former pastor of the Springdale Christian Reformed Church, Bradford, Ontario, where he served for seventeen years.



***Don’t Call It a Comeback: The Old Faith for a New Day.* Ed., Kevin DeYoung. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011, 252 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-4335-2169-0**

I was always looking for a book that tackled the basic articles of the faith, such as justification and sanctification, but also the ethical and practical issues, such as vocation, homosexuality and worship; a book that communicated in a way that resonated with contemporary Christians, especially young adults; a book that was alive, unapologetically theological and from an evangelical and Reformed perspective; a book I could give to young people heading off to university or the workplace. *Don’t Call It a Comeback* is the resource I needed.

The book is the work of eighteen contributors, all involved in some form of evangelical and Reformed ministry. The lone Canadian contributor is author/blogger Tim Challies based in Oakville, Ontario. The authors were all in

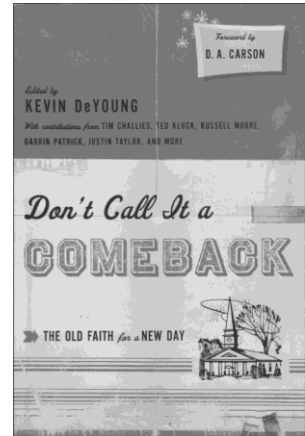
their twenties or thirties when the project began. The goal is not to be original but to outline the scriptural teaching on the Christian faith and life in a clear and engaging style that relates to contemporary readers. Some of the other authors include Jonathan Leeman, Ted Kluck, Justin Taylor, Thabiti Anyabwile and Tullian Tchividjian.

The first section, “Evangelical History: Looking Forward and Looking Back”, contains two chapters. Kevin DeYoung in a chapter entitled “The Secret Of Reaching The Next Generation” reveals the secret as walking with God and with people. Unpacked this means that those “who want to pass the faith to the next generation will: Grab them with passion. Win them with love. Hold them with holiness. Challenge them with truth. Amaze them with God” (p. 22). This is excellent advice and often overlooked. I would add that those who are wholeheartedly committed to this secret will at the same time be passionate about how we relate to contemporary culture (compare 1 Cor. 9:19-23). The second chapter is a helpful historical survey of evangelicalism.

The second section, “Evangelical Theology: Thinking, Feeling, and Believing the Truths That Matter Most”, outlines some of the essential doctrinal articles of the faith in chapters on the following topics: God, Scripture, the gospel, new birth, justification, sanctification, kingdom and Jesus Christ. The third section, “Evangelical Practice: Learning to Live Life God’s Way”, covers some key ethical and practical issues such as: vocation, social justice, homosexuality, abortion, gender confusion, the local church, worship and missions. The authors are aware of and informed by the best of evangelical and Reformed theology that has gone before them and provide sound and winsome formulations. Each chapter is not intended to be an exhaustive treatment of the subject. Those looking for a more detailed or nuanced treatment are referred to the first-rate suggested readings at the end of each chapter.

Don’t Call It a Comeback is a good book. I would echo Donald Carson’s suggestion, “I hope and pray that many Christians will buy multiple copies of the book so as to distribute it with generous abandon” (p. 14).

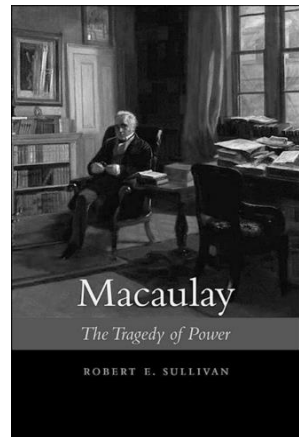
Reviewed by Howard McPhee



Historical Theology

***Macaulay: The Tragedy of Power.* Robert E. Sullivan. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press/Harvard University Press, 2009, 624 pp., hc. ISBN 978-0-674-03624-6**

Four years ago the celebration of the two-hundredth anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade in the British Empire highlighted a group of so-called “Saints” who were the driving force behind the legislation. “The Clapham sect” – named after the village south of London where many of them lived – were evangelical Christians committed to a bold and moral political agenda. Henry Venn, their founder and father of the rector of the local church, gathered around himself a galaxy of socially prominent and religiously committed individuals: William Wilberforce, Henry Thornton, James Stephen, Hannah Moore, and Zachary Macaulay. They had come under the influence of Charles Simeon, the Cambridge vicar who brought renewal to the Church of England at the end of the rationalistic and aggressively pagan eighteenth century.



The next generation of the Clapham sect veered off into different territory. Leslie Stephen, Virginia Woolf, E. M. Forster: these were grandchildren of the Clapham sect. The road from Clapham led inexorably to Bloomsbury, it would appear, and the brilliant intellect and moral suasion of the first generation became strikingly altered in the next (and beyond). One of the best known of the following generation of the Clapham sect was Thomas Babington Macaulay, son of Zachary. And a 2009 biography, written by Father Robert Sullivan of Notre Dame University, has attempted to place the famous historian in the context of his father and family, noting the interaction between the generations, father and son acting and reacting on each other. It makes fascinating reading for Evangelicals and particularly parents dealing with the handing on of their faith to the next generation.

As Sullivan tells it, Zachary Macaulay was determined to shape his son “into a prodigy who would grow up to lead the conversion of England into a godly nation” (p. 20). In spite of the mother’s wish the child be sent to a local private (“public” in British parlance) school, the father insisted that he be

shipped off, at the age of twelve, to a small academy outside Cambridge taught by an apostle of Simeon. As Tom went up to Cambridge, the distance between father and son became greater. Naturally gifted, with powers of expression that were the envy of his father, Thomas began to live a life, at least according to Sullivan, on two levels, maintaining what he describes as “a double game.” His father watched anxiously and powerlessly from the sidelines his son’s meteoric rise to influence, wealth, and power. But he had long since left the simple faith in which he was raised. Hence the subtitle: “The Tragedy of Power.”

Power is indeed what, according to Sullivan, it was all about. Having privately renounced his birthright of faith, Macaulay sought authority through his own soaring ambition. He went to India as a civil servant, and the common use of English in the subcontinent is directly a result of his insistence. He came out in favour of genocide as he dealt with the unrest in both south Asia and Ireland. He was profoundly racist and as his fame grew, and his income grew to levels unheard of by others who also made their living writing books (with an eventual peerage as the final reward), Macaulay became increasingly withdrawn from closer attachments, preferring his two sisters as confidants, to the point that Sullivan hints at a possible impropriety in their relationship.

The electors of Edinburgh were not so blind to his duplicities. After seventeen years in Parliament, at an election in 1847, Macaulay was roundly defeated by a businessman who had played a prominent part in the Disruption of the Church of Scotland three years earlier. Charles Cowan (whom Sullivan describes simply as “an ornament of the Free Church of Scotland” [page 269]) trumped Macaulay in the polls because, it was stated, “Christian men ought to send Christian men to represent them.” The final tally was a demonstration of the rage of Lowland Scots against not only Macaulay’s imperious ways but the tin-eared legislators of London who were incapable to understand their struggle over a decade to establish the spiritual independence of the Kirk. In my forthcoming biography of Cowan, titled *The Man Who Beat Macaulay*, I demonstrate the opposing, consistently Reformed, ethic that brought Charles Cowan (a cousin of Thomas Chalmers) to the House of Commons as a founder of the Free Church of Scotland. For the next twelve years he provided a Christian voice in the House of Commons, defending the honour of his father’s first cousin Thomas Chalmers, and espousing, amid the ridicule of the House, a strict sabbatarianism.

Reviews of Sullivan’s book have been, as always with reviews, widely diverse as they assess how credible is his denouement of a Victorian idol. Macaulay’s image had been carefully burnished by his nephew, George Macaulay Trevelyan, in one of the great biographies of a Victorian worthy. David Bebbington, in the March-April 2011 issue of *Books and Culture* (pp. 34-5), stoutly defends Macaulay and sees Sullivan’s assessment as a denigration of Macaulay’s Evangelical heritage. I would rather see Sullivan’s exposé, if

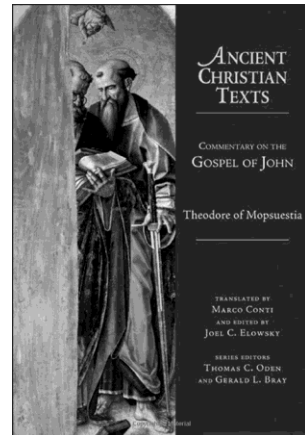
it can be called that, as a recognition of the difficulty yes, of parenting, but more the failure of the Clapham sect to pass on to their brilliant and articulate progeny a strong commitment to the same Christian values for which they stood and powerfully articulated. What all the talent of Leslie Stephen, Virginia Woolf, E. M. Forster – to name only three of their gifted but godless descendents – could have done in establishing a truly Christian Britain can only be guessed. What we have today is the ultimate result of their defection, a stridently secular and anti-religious Britain. More's the tragedy.

Reviewed by A. Donald MacLeod

***Commentary on the Gospel of John.* Theodore of Mopsuestia. Translated by Marco Conti. Ancient Christian Texts. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010, 172 pp., hc. ISBN 978-0-8308-2906-4**

Theodore of Mopsuestia (350-428) was a proto-Nestorian; as such he tended to emphasize Christ's humanity though without denying His deity. He was a close friend of John Chrysostom, who bullied him into dropping his engagement with a young woman. The two were disciples of another proto-Nestorian, Diodore of Tarsus. Theodore is best known for his literal interpretation of Scripture, somewhat of an anachronism in his day, though he occasionally employed allegorical interpretation, just as allegorical interpreters occasionally employed literal interpretation. His commentary on the Song of Solomon was condemned by his disciple Theodoret of Cyrrhus as unfit even for the mouth of a crazy woman, but for the Nestorian mystic Isaac of Nineveh he was "the Blessed Interpreter." Theodore was posthumously condemned as a Nestorian at the Second Council of Constantinople (553), a council that was meant to appease the Monophysites in the Eastern half of the empire, and many of his writings were subsequently destroyed. No one should doubt the resolution of Justinian I, the emperor who convened the council.

Theodore's commentary on the Gospel of John is of major interest because the Gospel dwells so strongly on the deity of Christ and Theodore has been seen as minimizing this aspect of Christ's person. The Antiochene school, of which he was a member, was certainly inclined to draw too much of a wedge between the Son of God and the Son of David; this was their reaction to the heresy of Apollinarius, who mingled the Son of God and the



Son of David into a third entity. The present translation is by Marco Conti, a professor at the Ateneo Salesiano and the Richmond University, both in Rome. He translates from the Syriac translation of the no longer extant Greek original, correctly believing the surviving Greek fragments of Theodore's commentary are a translation from the Syriac translation. His scriptural translations are from the Syriac translation of the commentary which employs the Peshitta. The commentary must have been widely read in the Nestorian monasteries of the Christian East.

Theodore approaches his task with due seriousness. Right at the outset he sets himself against the Arian Asterius, who wrote a now lost exposition of John and who denied the deity of Christ. It is hard to escape the conclusion that Asterius is the subconscious agonist of the commentary, as the Gnostic Heracleon was of Origen's commentary on the Gospel. He is in frequent dialogue with the Arians, for instance in his comments on 5:19; 6:57; 10:18.

The author of the Gospel is for Theodore clearly the apostle John, "the disciple whom Jesus loved." He preserves a tradition about John, found nowhere else to my knowledge, wherein the apostle approved the writings of the other Evangelists but criticized them as ignoring to some extent Christ's deity and omitting important miracles like the turning of water into wine at the marriage feast of Cana. At the request of his disciples John immediately undertook the writing of his Gospel. Theodore finds him to be the most precise Evangelist – "this took place in Bethany across the Jordan" (1:28) – and the only thoroughly chronological one.

Theodore's is a fast-paced commentary which does not spend much time with John's prologue, but his remarks on it are fully orthodox. The Son was begotten by the Father but not in such a way that we can say He came after Him or that He is less divine than the Father. His comments on the Holy Spirit's manifestation as a dove at Christ's baptism show that he regarded the Spirit as equally divine with the Father and the Son. In general his interpretations of the abstract teachings of the Gospel are tedious, and he additionally seems impervious to John's contrast between light and darkness. He has frequent recourse to Paul's epistles, especially Romans, producing a curious blend of Pauline and Johannine theology.

Theodore is sensitive to the eschatological ideals and confusions of Jesus' day. Learning that John the Baptist was not the Messiah the Jews asked him if he was the Prophet, the selfsame entity. When Nathanael called Jesus the Son of God he meant He was the Messiah, not yet realizing the Messiah would be God Himself. Nathanael was impressed that Jesus had seen him under the fig tree before He saw him in the flesh, but he would soon see the angels ascending and descending upon Him. This, Theodore tells us, was so he would understand that Jesus was the creator of the angels.

Theodore's exegesis is marked by a common sense lacking in many contemporary commentaries. The paralytic who was healed by Jesus, who was warned not to sin again, and who subsequently revealed to the Pharisees that

it was Jesus who had healed him, was not moved by a thankful desire to make Jesus known but was a betrayer of his own benefactor. Theodore is refreshingly non-contemporary in another sense as well. After the miracle of the loaves and the fishes Jesus instructs His disciples to gather up the remaining food so that nothing will be lost. This was so they could enjoy it for a few days longer and also witness to Christ, not because He was afraid of food going to waste. He contrasts the lavishness of Jesus' miracle with the Old Testament miracles of the manna and the widow's oil in which the recipients were given no more than they needed.

Theodore often resorts to paraphrase and amplification. When the Jews gathered around Jesus he states that "they surrounded him and kept him in the middle" (p. 97). Not infrequently he divulges unusual insights. The curious Jews who wanted to see the resurrected Lazarus "expected to hear something extraordinary from him, like someone who comes back to civilization from a strange and remote land" (p. 108). He focuses on the reclusiveness of the Saviour, an essentially public figure. Throughout His career He was not interested in looking for glory or desiring exposure. He did not run after the crowd; the crowd ran after Him. He consistently regards Galilee as pagan and as therefore despised by the Jews. Christ introduced a third world religion after paganism and Judaism. Paganism was false because it had many gods, and Judaism was false because it had no knowledge of the Trinity. The definition of Christianity is given in John 17:3: the knowledge of the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He sent.

The Lord's prayer, recorded in chapter 17, is viewed by Theodore as a continuation of the Upper Room discourse, disguised in the form of a prayer. When Jesus replied to the soldiers who came to arrest Him and they fell to the ground, they did so because the Savior was supernaturally forcing them to fall. After the Resurrection Thomas was the most open in his resistance to the miracle, but none of the disciples believed it until they had proof. In his comments on John 21:18-19, Theodore includes the tradition of Peter being crucified with the head downward.

As to the much vexed question of his Christology, Theodore certainly makes use of the phrase "the man assumed" (*analēphthenta* in the Greek) to describe Jesus of Nazareth. This was an unguarded phrase and can give the impression that Jesus was possessed by God just as Judas was said to be temporarily possessed by Satan. Yet at one point he envisions a mixture of God and the man assumed, an unusual accomplishment in an Antiochene, and his piety is never in doubt.

Theodore's book is a valuable commentary on John's Gospel but an even more valuable window into certain aspects of late antiquity. In his discussion of John 10:17 he reveals himself a believer in only the soul and the body, as against the once popular Christian (and Platonic) designation of man as spirit, soul, and body. He subscribes to the late antique deprecation of the body in his statement that Jesus, wearing a towel about His waist during His washing of the disciples' feet, was unashamed of His "immodest attire" (p. 117).

Conti's translation is an adequate one, and he is not to be blamed for certain disquieting typos in the text. He includes many helpful footnotes but does not interact sufficiently with the Syriac original. When he does so it is always edifying: Theodore intends Jesus' words to Peter in John 18:11 – "Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?" – as declarative rather than interrogative, a possibility that is not followed in the Syriac translation itself.

The present commentary on John is one of several volumes in IVP's Ancient Christian Texts, a sequel to the Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. One small drawback to both series is the use of double columns to include more words on the page so that when the book is open one is looking at, in reality, four pages. The new series, which will be shorter, is in many respects the better of the two, mainly in that it allows the ancient commentator to speak at length and without interruption. The forthcoming translation of Cyril of Alexandria's commentary on the Gospel of John, positing a Christology at the opposite end of the spectrum from Theodore's, will be especially instructive.

Reviewed by Theodore Sabo, an assistant pastor in Washington State, USA, and a Ph.D. candidate with North-West University of South Africa. His thesis is on the origins of Eastern Christian mysticism. Mr. Sabo is a member of both the North American Patristics Society and the Canadian Society of Patristic Studies.



***The Westminster Assembly: Reading Its Theology in Historical Context.* Robert Letham. The Westminster Assembly and the Reformed Faith Series. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2009, 399 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-87552-612-6**

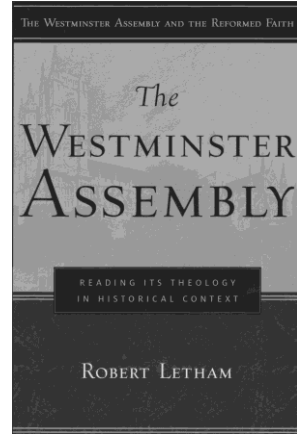
For anybody studying the Westminster Assembly, its documents or elements of its theology, Letham's book will prove an invaluable resource in two ways. The first is that it sets the Assembly in its context, showing what concerns were important to it and why. The second is that it will be a useful bibliographic source. I expect the book will be even more useful to students for its introduction to other Reformed writers and to the history of the Assembly than for Letham's own penetrating insights. The author teaches at the Wales Evangelical School of Theology and authored the award-winning work, *The Holy Trinity* (P&R, 2004).

This book is unlikely to become popular reading. It is not filled with bright new ideas to catch people's imaginations and stir their zeal in the

Lord's service. It is a detailed, carefully referenced academic study, which should be on the shelves of every school's theological library.

Underlying Letham's *Westminster Assembly*, and referred to throughout, is Van Dixhoorn's recent doctoral dissertation, "Reforming the Reformation"¹. Van Dixhoorn gathered and set into readable form a more complete set of the minutes of the Assembly than has been available. This gives Letham a base for a more rigorous analysis of the Assembly and its actions than has been possible previously.

One point is key – and usually neglected – the Westminster Assembly was a seventeenth century English assembly (pp. 2-3, 11). The main issues which shaped its thinking were English. Letham points out that the Westminster documents were adopted in Scotland and North America and largely ignored in England. Consequently, most theologians approached the confessional documents from North American or Scottish Presbyterian perspectives, not from the perspective of seventeenth century England. However, to understand the Westminster documents correctly you need to see them in their own English seventeenth century context.



He begins with a survey of the historical context in England, from Henry VIII to the establishment of the Assembly, which shaped the concerns of the Assembly. As Letham points out, they are often not the concerns of later interpreters.

Letham then gives a summary of the theological context, beginning with English thought. He goes on to consider the sources of the Assembly's doctrine, highlighting James Ussher and the Irish Articles of Religion (1615) and the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England. He quotes with approval Warfield's conclusion that the Assembly took from the Irish Articles the general arrangement of their Confession and much of the treatment of subjects such as the Holy Scripture, God's Eternal Decree, Christ the Mediator, the Covenant of Grace, and the Lord's Supper. "These chapters might almost be spoken of as only greatly enriched revisions of the corresponding sections of the Irish Articles."²

Defence of the Thirty-Nine Articles was the first task assigned the Assembly. Only after Parliament's alliance with the Presbyterians in Scotland

¹ Chad B. Van Dixhoorn, "Reforming the Reformation" (unpublished Ph. D. thesis, Cambridge University, 2004). Letham notes that "this will soon be superseded by the publication of a multivolume work containing the minutes and all extant papers and correspondence of the Assembly and its members", p. xvi. Publication will commence in 2012.

² B. B. Warfield, *The Westminster Assembly and Its Work* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1934), p. 59, as cited in Letham, p. 63.

was the Assembly directed to produce a new confessional document. Letham concludes this section by going through the Thirty-Nine Articles, showing that almost every article was reflected in the Westminster Confession (pp. 71-83). Of the articles which were omitted, often it was because they were simply no longer an issue. He also traces and stresses connections with Reformed thought on the Continent and conscious and abundant reference to earlier writers back to the church fathers (pp. 84-98).

Turning to look at the work of the Assembly itself, Letham makes a critical point: the Assembly was not a monolithic group with a strong consensus on everything discussed. "The Assembly documents need to be understood as compromise documents. Compromise is inevitable in a group of 150 people" (p. 111). Far from casting out the dissidents, they tried to allow varying views in many areas. For example,

. . . vivid differences surfaced in the extensive debate on justification when revisions to the Thirty-Nine Articles were being considered. Many divines (roughly one-third of the recorded speakers) argued that it is improper to say that Christ's active obedience is imputed to us in justification. . . . Eventually the approved revision referred to Christ's "whole obedience and satisfaction being by God imputed unto us." This statement satisfied the majority, who held to the imputation of Christ's active obedience. However, it was couched so as to avoid any idea that Christ's obedience is divided, an idea unacceptable to those who opposed the imputation of his active obedience. It also allowed Christ's obedience to be equated with his satisfaction of divine justice on the cross. It was a compromise enabling both sides to claim it as their own. . . . The Assembly clearly committed itself to regard the active obedience as imputed in justification, but the minority who disagreed were not run out of the Assembly. They continued to participate actively and productively. (p. 113)

"In short, the Assembly, within limits, was inclusive rather than exclusive. It sought to reach the widest measure of agreement possible, within acceptable limits of doctrine and practice" (p. 117). In this it adhered to the beliefs and practices of the Reformers who, at least for the most part, did not voluntarily separate from the Roman Catholic Church but worked within it until they were driven out. They understood that the unity of the church is a critical part of faithfulness in doctrine. Though that stress on unity has almost vanished today in evangelical circles, the Westminster Assembly still understood this and worked very hard to avoid dividing the church.

On the other hand, there were lines that could not be crossed. Letham mentions the distinctive teachings of the Church of Rome, the deviations which had led to the Reformation (pp. 117-118). Again, though Luther and Melancthon are cited with approval as authorities, "The Assembly distanced

itself here and there from some aspects of Lutheranism. This is particularly evident in the Confession's chapters on the sacraments" (p. 118). Then, "The Assembly is stronger in its opposition to Anabaptism. This is especially notable in the sections on the church and the sacraments, but it also surfaces in connection with lawful oaths and vows . . . and on the right of private property" (p. 118).

The most important opposition, though, will surprise most of us.

Fourth, and most vehemently of all, is the immense concern expressed in the Assembly against antinomianism, the belief that Christ had fulfilled the law in its entirety on behalf of his people, so that it no longer had any significance for them. This was the real perceived threat, not only to the church, but also to civil society . . . A standing committee on the antinomians was set up, and it was constantly reporting to the Assembly, questioning prominent antinomians, arranging for their books to be burned, and sending them to Parliament for penal sanctions to be enforced. These were the main opponents the Assembly had in mind throughout its work. (p. 119)

The Assembly also took a stand against Arminian and Amyraldian teaching, though Letham notes that the Assembly included hypothetical universalists who were evidently regarded differently than the Amyraldians and were accepted (p. 119).

The latter two-thirds of Letham's book is devoted to examination of the various areas of doctrine set out in the Confession and Catechisms. While it is a useful commentary on these documents, the primary value of this section continues to be its exposure of the context of the Assembly, as Letham discusses some of the debates and the sources of the teaching of the various members. At times he adds an "excursis" on some portion. For me, some of these were among the most interesting parts of the book. Excursis 2, for example, traces the development of the doctrine of the imputation of Adam's sin from Calvin to Westminster (p. 206 ff.). Excursis 3 looks in some detail at the early debates on justification (p. 250 ff.).

While Letham actively defends the Assembly against its modern critics, he is not a slavish admirer. He does not hesitate to point out statements or sections in which he believes a different emphasis would have been better. Readers will differ in their assessment of these friendly criticisms.

I noted two typographical errors. On page 159, at the beginning of the third sentence, WCF 3.1 should be WCF 2.1. On page 287 Letham wrote, "In 18.3, the Confession asserts that assurance is not so of the essence of faith that a true believer may wait long for it." Actually, the Confession asserts "that assurance is not so of the essence of faith *but* that a true believer may wait long for it" [emphasis added]. Omitting the "but" reverses the sense.

It would have been helpful if the author had regularly included cross references to the Shorter Catechism with those he makes to the Confession and Larger Catechism.

These are minor defects in a wonderfully helpful book. It would be invaluable if it only reminded lovers of the Confession that it is not meant to be interpreted rigorously to exclude others who differ in small ways. However, it offers much more. It's my pleasure to recommend it to your attention.

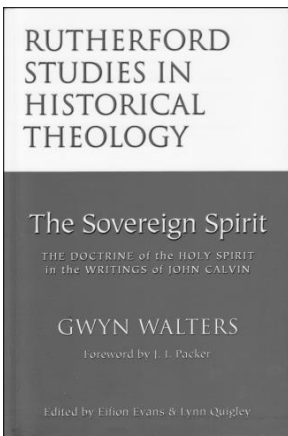
Reviewed by Donald A. Codling of Bedford, Nova Scotia. He is the Stated Clerk of the Eastern Canada Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in America.



***The Sovereign Spirit: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit in the Writings of John Calvin.* Gwyn Walters. Rutherford Studies in Historical Theology. Edinburgh: Rutherford House, 2009, 253 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-946068-89-0**

This book is substantially the Ph.D. thesis presented to Edinburgh University by the author in 1949. However, the fact that over half a century has since passed ought not to diminish its value. Eifion Evans points out in the editorial preface that in the intervening period studies in Calvin's teaching on the Holy Spirit are few.

The work is thoroughly researched and is replete with primary quotations from Calvin's *Institutes*, commentaries, sermons, letters and tracts. These quotations help to provide an excellent picture of Calvin's teaching and show that the Holy Spirit is prominent in all aspects of his theology. Authors such as Owen, Warfield and Smeaton are referred to with due respect. There is a good table of contents and an extensive bibliography but unfortunately there is no index.



Calvin was sometimes challenged by certain contemporaries regarding the doctrine of the Trinity. His reluctance to satisfy strident critics was mainly due to the fact that he did not regard the creeds of the church as having primary authority. However, he was thoroughly Trinitarian. He de-

sired that people should not rest in mere doctrinal statements but that they should know a vital relationship with the Father, the Son and the Spirit through the Word. Walters says, "It could be claimed that Calvin excelled his predecessors in his refusal to hesitate in attributing complete aseity to the Holy Spirit as well as to the Son . . ." (p. 10).

The author observes that “the secret testimony of the Spirit is acknowledged as one of Calvin’s distinct contributions to the problem of authority in religion”. He says that it is the Holy Spirit Who enables the believer to recognize the authority of Scripture, and he quotes from the *Institutes*, showing the teaching that the Word “bears upon the face of it as clear evidence of its truth, as white and black do of their colour, sweet and bitter of their taste” (p. 40). Walters admits that others, including the Fathers such as Augustine and Reformers such as Luther and Zwingli, speak of the testimony of the Spirit to the truth of Scripture. He says that in Calvin’s case it came to take “a cardinal place in his system and is integral to his whole thought”. This did not mean, however, that Calvin lacked an emphasis on external factors as well.

On page forty-five we are provided with a good quotation from Calvin on hearing a sermon or a reading from the Scripture: “When we come to hear the sermon or take up the Bible, we must not have the foolish arrogance of thinking that we shall easily understand everything. But we must come with reverence, we must wait entirely upon God, knowing that we need to be taught by his Holy Spirit, and that without him we cannot understand anything that is shown us in his Word.”

Calvin of course emphasized the work of the Spirit in all aspects of the application of redemption. Walters speaks of his teaching, that repentance not only follows faith but is produced by it, as being, in the view of many, a Copernican revolution in the sphere of experience (p. 74). We are reminded, however, that this teaching is not without precedent. Augustine had expressed a similar sentiment in the words, “I would not seek thee had I not already found thee” (p. 77).

Walters asserts Calvin’s emphasis on faith as a gift of the Holy Spirit. He points out the Reformer’s acute awareness of the opposition of a sinner to pure grace. With regard to experience, the sinner stumbles over the word *sola* in *sola fide*. It is thus one of the greatest works of the Spirit “to break down the antagonism to sheer grace which is found in man’s pride”. With regard to sanctification as well as justification, the believer is indebted to the Spirit of God. In Calvin’s words, “Christ is never where the Spirit is not.”

Calvin ascribes full place to the work of the Holy Spirit in all aspects of the believer’s life, and he would not support the view that a Christian lives a defeated life until a certain moment when he becomes suddenly victorious. There is a good discussion on prayer. In this context the author observes that “the principal work of the Spirit is faith; and the principal exercise of faith is prayer” (p. 126).

When he comes to the discussion of predestination, Walters notes that this subject is not developed until late in the *Institutes*, following a comprehensive examination of the experimental aspects of the Christian faith; the author notes, “He does not deal with it in a cold calculating manner.” In other words, the subject is dealt with in the context of the Holy Spirit’s saving work.

There is an important section on the subject of Calvin's doctrine of the Spirit in relation to subsequent teaching on the Spirit, notably among Puritans and Quakers (pp. 177-199). Calvin was a theologian of the Spirit, but at the same time he was a theologian of the Word. It is the Word of God which is the touchstone of the Spirit. Fox and the Quakers would reverse this order. Puritans such as Owen, Goodwin and Sibbes were one with Calvin on this matter. The volume would serve as a corrective of many extravagant views of later times.

The final chapter discusses the relevance of Calvin's teaching on this subject for the present. This Reformer's emphasis on the authority of the Word and the Holy Spirit's sovereign work are indeed of paramount importance. There is need for an emphasis on the Word of God and the application of it to the heart by the Spirit. Calvin provides a great example of a Reformed Charismatic.

This book is very suitable for pastors but also for anyone able to read serious literature on biblical matters. The style is very readable and one can dip into the book at any point. It would be very worthwhile to have on any five-foot bookshelf.

There is considerable literary interest in Calvin and the Reformed faith today. Walter's book deserves to have a place among the best of such works. The description of Calvin as a theologian of cold and unflinching logic is quite wrong. This book effectively shows that the Reformer was truly a theologian of the Spirit.

Reviewed by William R. Underhay, a retired minister of the Free Church of Scotland, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. He now makes his home in Montague, PEI. Rev. Underhay has been a regular reviewer for the Haddington House Journal.



***The Legacy of the King James Bible: Celebrating 400 Years of the Most Influential English Translation.* Leland Ryken. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011, 265 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-4335-1388-6**

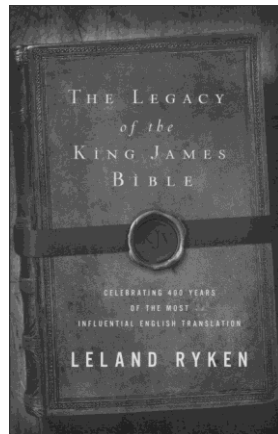
Leland Ryken is eminently qualified to write this celebratory work on the occasion of the 400th anniversary of the first publication of the Authorized Version or King James Version of the English Bible. Ryken is professor of English at Wheaton College but also a very noted author in the field of the Bible, being an editor of the major reference work *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*.

His latest book, *The Legacy of the King James Bible*, is arranged into four well-defined parts. The author is a master of organization in his writing. Part

one is “The King James Bible in Its Own Day” (pp. 21-67). This section could have become very tedious, but the author writes with a style accessible for the non-historian. Ryken concludes (and I believe correctly), “Some of the famous phrases that found their way into the KJV first appeared in the Wycliffite Bible. Nonetheless, William Tyndale is the forerunner to whom the King James Bible owes the most” (p. 29).

Part one includes an adequate survey of the “many good” translations which the King James translators used and also an excellent chapter (three) on “The Making of the King James Bible”. I found myself wanting to know more on this latter subject so went to some of the other books being published on the subject which provided more background here. This was not Ryken’s primary focus.

Part two, “The King James Bible in History”, is a tremendous survey of the vast impact this English Bible has had on the history of Bible translation, language, education, religion and culture. This part should be mandatory reading in liberal arts classes today because I have a strong suspicion this influence has been almost forgotten and is not being taught today. I rejoice that Ryken has articulated it so well:



Claims that the King James Bible was the most important influence on English and American culture for over three centuries are accurate. This is partly camouflaged because discussions of the influence of the Bible on culture are couched in terms of the generic “Bible,” without recourse to what Bible is in view. But between 1700 and 1975, any consideration of biblical influence on public life, politics, education, music, and art is actually a consideration of the King James Bible. (p. 114)

Ryken is a teacher of English literature. Chapters eight to eleven show his literary knowledge of the English text of this Bible. He begins chapter eight by quoting Alister McGrath, who wrote that “later generations recognized as beauty and elegance” the final product produced by the King James translators (p. 117). Ryken deals with the literary contradictions which scholars have spoken about for generations, some arguing for simple vocabulary of the Anglo-Saxon fold, others for the Latinate and the abstract. The reality is both are there. The author throws out stylistic traits, and if one has been a reader of the KJV one will immediately say, “Yes, I did see that.” For example, the conjunction “and” is often very heavily used and used effectively. The best of all here is that Ryken speaks of the “orality” of the King James Bible, something virtually forgotten today – it was the Bible “appointed to be read in Churches”.

English teachers will relish part four, “The Literary Influence of the King James Bible”. Here the author takes up the KJV as a literary source and influence. He also looks at those who were influenced in the early stages by the KJV, for example Milton, Herbert and Bunyan; then latterly some of the great names of English literature – Blake, Wordsworth and Coleridge, plus others. The modern era is also included. Ryken is not exhaustive, but he takes select case studies and builds his argument from there.

Ryken has produced an excellent commemorative resource on this occasion of the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible. I only had a couple of small quibbles, one being an inaccurate place name. Ryken’s *Legacy* is highly recommended.

Reviewed by Jack C. Whytock

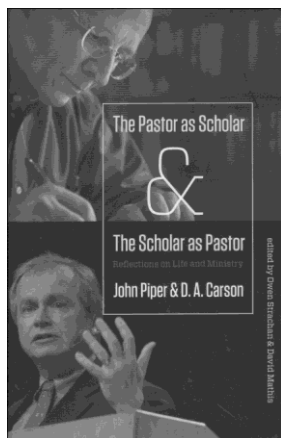
Applied Theology

***The Pastor as Scholar & The Scholar as Pastor: Reflections on Life and Ministry.* John Piper and D. A. Carson. Edited by Owen Strachan and David Mathis. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011, 124 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-4335-2647-3**

This little volume grew out of a series of two addresses by Dr. John Piper, pastor for preaching and vision at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, and Dr. D. A. Carson, research professor of New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. The addresses were given at Park Community Church in April of 2009 in Chicago as part of the Gospel Coalition and sponsored by the Carl F. Henry Center for Theological Understanding based at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Chicago. They were then edited by Owen Strachan and David Mathis. It is a book that has already been widely reviewed and warmly welcomed.

The concept is a unique one and yet seems to be striking positive a chord with many as something that needs to be recovered. Piper and Carson, two men whose lives and gifts have shaped modern evangelicalism in a profound way over the last number of years, bring their years of experience, both in the church and the academy, to a wider audience to show what a blessing there is in a healthy marriage between a serious scholarship and the work of pastoral ministry. Piper had gone from teaching New Testament at Bethel College in St. Paul, Minnesota, where he was nurtured under the writings of Jonathan Edwards, arguably one of the greatest minds in the history of the Evangelical church, into the pastoral ministry at Bethlehem Baptist in Minneapolis. Don Carson, a son of a minister himself, went the opposite route as he began in the pastoral ministry in British Columbia and ended up in Christian academia at Trinity Evangelical in Chicago.

Regardless of where God is using them, they have both retained a deep passion for the occupation they left as is reflected in Piper's latest work *Think*, where he urges Christians to engage the mind to the glory of God, and Carson's *The Cross and Christian Ministry*, where his New Testament scholarship is brought to bear on pastoral ministry.



Piper begins by looking at the pastor as scholar. His college work left him with a strong passion for learning, yet he says himself, the call to pastoral ministry came just after the publication of his book on Romans 9 called *The Justification of God*. In a one-sentence summary of the pastor-scholar relationship, Piper recalls the powerful feeling of God saying to him, “I, the God of Romans 9, will be *proclaimed* and not just analyzed or explained” (p. 44). For him, thinking and analyzing were no longer sufficient; he had to preach! For others, that passion may be used in another direction as they pass on the fruit and delight of pastoral ministry to a body of students. Yet both are working in concert for the greater need of the Kingdom.

This was a point that came across powerfully in the book. So often young men who have a passion for communicating the Word of God are at a loss to know where their true gifts lie. Is it at an academic or pastoral level? Piper’s journey demonstrates that it may not always be an either-or career choice; where you start in Christian ministry is not always where you end up. One has not made a mistake if they begin in academia or the church and then decide it is no longer for them.

Piper shows, via Jonathan Edwards and C. S. Lewis, that a vigorous Christian mind is no enemy of experimental religion, but encourages readers to always remember that for God to be glorified there has to be the balance. Piper reminds us, “The Devil himself has many right thoughts about God.” And yet, “If God is going to be glorified in our being satisfied in him, then our satisfaction in him must be based on truth. And that is what we find by the right use of the mind – by scholarly effort” (p. 50).

Piper best illustrates the need for the pastor to be a scholar as he asks us to imagine a man whom you don’t know coming to you and entrusting you with \$10,000 of his own money. “Why” you ask the man. He responds, “I just feel this warm feeling in my heart that you are a trustworthy person.” Piper asks, “Do you feel honoured by that warm feeling in his heart?” But suppose, says Piper, that the man replies by saying, “I have been watching you at work for over a year . . . and I have found you to be a reliable person. . . . You are a person of character, and I have reasons for believing that.” Piper adds, “Now, do you feel honoured by the joyful feeling in that man’s heart? Yes, you do. Because his emotions toward you are well grounded” (p. 51).

Piper sums up his argument for a scholarly pastor:

So good scholarship – good use of the mind in seeking and finding truth – stands in the service of honest, courageous ministry. And the goal of that ministry, whether it succeeds or not, is to put people’s souls on a solid footing. The aim is that great affections for God would be awakened by clearly seen and courageously spoken truth. (p. 59)

Carson’s contribution is less biographical and yet equally as valuable. Where Piper sees the need for pastors to practise a rigorous scholarship, Car-

son wants to see the academy as handmaiden of the church with its end to have scholarship bear fruit in the lives of the worshipping community. Having spent most of his career in academia, Carson sees the danger of a knowledge that only puffs up. “Nothing is quite as deceitful as an evangelical scholarly mind that thinks it is especially close to God *because* of its scholarship rather than because of Jesus” (p. 76).

Dr. Carson lays out a twelve-step approach to ensuring the academic keeps the telos of his work in view. I will highlight only a few for space. He stresses that the scholar is always moving in the orbit of the local church. Let your student know that you love the local church! As Carson says, “Avoid becoming a *mere* quartermaster . . . ones who provide supplies to the front-lines. . . . This means engaging the outside world at a personal level, at an intellectual and cultural level; it means working and serving in the local church; it means engaging in local evangelism” (p. 82). It means avoiding the temptation for peer acceptance rather than faithful biblical scholarship. Related to this is to avoid making “new discoveries” the ultimate rather than expounding the faith once delivered to the saints (p. 101). Moreover, for the scholar it means treating those in front of you as not just absorbers of information but “. . . blood-bought children of the living God . . . organically members of the church of the living God, the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit” (p. 92).

The editors bring the book to a conclusion with an overview of why such a book as this is so timely. Many of the leading lights in modern evangelicalism are themselves pastor-scholars. People like Tim Keller, Ligon Duncan and Mark Dever have not only been successful preachers of the Word but have pursued a vibrant scholarship in the churches they serve – if not beginning theological schools of their own, certainly actively participating and teaching. They, too, follow in the footsteps of other pastor-scholars like Edwards (whom Piper has popularised), Calvin and the Puritans. Yet it is a passion that can be traced back, says David Mathis, to the Apostle Paul, who, though being a towering intellect and scholar in his day, also knew of the daily pressure on himself of his anxiety for all the churches (p. 109).

While Albert Mohler might be over-stating it in his endorsement saying, “Few books are as needed as this”, I would agree with Gerald Hiestand when he says, “These are important chapters by two of evangelicalism’s most important thinkers. In an age that has largely forgotten the native connection between theology and the church, Piper and Carson remind us that these two worlds belong together.”

The integrity, experience and influence of these men show they deserve to be heard and that this is an emphasis the church cannot afford to ignore. Warmly recommended!

Reviewed by Kent Compton

***If You Bite & Devour One Another: Biblical Principles for Handling Conflict.* Alexander Strauch. Littleton, CO: Lewis and Roth, 2011, 177 pp., paper. ISBN 978-093608331-5**

Alexander Strauch has authored numerous books in the area of ecclesiology ranging from the eldership to the deaconate to various other works on leadership within the church. Strauch served as a teaching elder at Littleton Bible Church in Littleton, Colorado and taught philosophy and New Testament literature at Colorado Christian University. His most significant work, entitled *Biblical Eldership* (which sold 250,000 copies and translated into over twenty languages since publication), has been an essential work for years in the study of eldership.

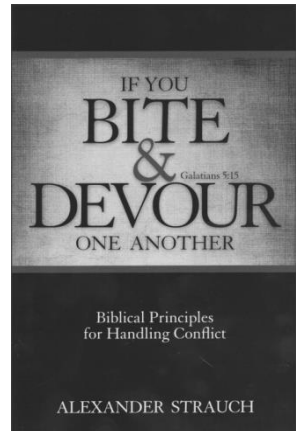
The importance of this book can be seen in the title, which Strauch takes from Paul's letter to the Galatians where Paul says, "But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another" (Gal 5:15 ESV). What could better express the urgency of putting such principles into practice than the possibility of biting and devouring? Nothing less than the health and witness of the church is at stake.

In introducing the book, Strauch makes a needed qualification saying, "It is helpful to keep in mind that there is nothing wrong with Christians disagreeing with one another or passionately defending our beliefs. . . . What is wrong is for believers to behave in an ungodly, unbiblical manner in the midst of their disagreements" (p. 3).

He says further,

My aim for this book is to provide a better understanding of what the Bible teaches about conflict and to help believers learn how to respond to conflict according to biblical principles. In order not to present an overwhelming amount of information, the book focuses strictly on the presentation and exposition of scriptural passages that address conflict in the New Testament churches. (p. 5)

This is exactly what we find in this very helpful volume. The book is given in ten chapters. In the first three, Strauch shows how we are to act in the Spirit, in love and in humility. This is followed by three chapters on controlling anger, the tongue and criticism. The next two chapters are devoted to the New Testament model for pursuing peace and reconciliation. The final two chapters deal with false teachers and controversy.



One of the emphases in Strauch's book is showing Christians who they are in Christ and therefore what a wide range of recourses the Lord of the Church has made available to them to deal with conflict. He points out firstly that conflict resolution is not just something that Christians are to pull out of the closet in times of trouble. We are to be proactive. It means actively walking in the Spirit by using the means the Spirit has given for such times: prayer, Spirit-led self-examination, walking with other Spirit-filled believers, exercising humility, goodness and gentleness. All of these are ways to not only quickly defuse an otherwise unseemly situation but to embrace an opportunity for real Christ-like growth among believers.

Conflict resolution means cultivating biblical notions of love; when we are deeply rooted and grounded in love, we are not caught off guard when conflict arises. He says, "Remember that love is the first fruit of the Holy Spirit, so choose to 'walk in love'. . . . *Decide beforehand how you should respond toward those with whom you disagree*" (p. 26). How often it is that we are simply "caught off guard" because we are not sufficiently constrained by the love of Christ. In chapter two he unpacks 1 Corinthians 13 by taking each proposition in turn and applying it to conflict resolution.

Not only does the author use biblical propositions to bolster his case, he also provides concrete biblical examples of just how people like Paul applied these principles. Strauch recounts the conflict between Paul and Barnabas and concludes: "Luke's account leaves the dispute between Paul and Barnabas unresolved." But he says they "didn't carry on years of personal warfare against each other. . . . Instead, they refused to speak evil of one another or to keep records of frustrations and wrongs. In fact, Paul later spoke well of Barnabas as his partner in the gospel" (p. 28). Strauch stresses that Christians are to use every opportunity to exalt the love of Christ in their relationships, especially in times of conflict. His quote about Thomas Cranmer is worth noting in this regard, "To do him any wrong was to beget a kindness from him" (p. 31).

The now famous account of the doctrinal differences between Whitefield and Wesley furnishes us with a great example from church history of how this gospel spirit comes to bear in our lives. Strauch quotes Iain Murray saying, "Error must be opposed even when held by fellow members of Christ, but if that opposition cannot co-exist with a true love for all the saints and a longing for their spiritual prosperity then it does not glorify God nor promote the edification of the church" (p. 140).

This is one of the by-products of this book in that it brings out the glory, power and testimony of the gospel, which ultimately is the only antidote for sin among believers. The spirit of Strauch's work is to exalt the reconciliation God has effected through the Cross which now flows through His people. Furthermore, it is to ensure that this spirit is being brought to bear upon whatever conflicts may arise. "*Only when we are properly dressed in Christ-like character can we handle conflict properly or discuss reasonably and profitably our doctrinal differences or policy issues*" (p. 61).

Strauch gives guidelines concerning how to do it effectively and constructively if we must criticize. This might include checking our own attitudes and motives beforehand, speaking gently, balancing our criticism with words of encouragement and indeed welcoming criticism if it is directed toward us.

Though there tends to be a bit of repetition and overlap, this arises out of some of the solutions moving from personal to group examples; yet, one would be hard pressed to find a better more gospel-centred and Christ exalting manual on church conflict. The reader is challenged to personal self-examination as to whether he or she is always walking in love and to think more deeply about the far-reaching effect of the ministry of the gospel in all relationships.

Each chapter concludes with a helpful summary and reminders while a generous index at the back allows for ready access to relevant scriptures. Strauch has done us a service in giving us this study. At the risk of sounding cliché, I would recommend this work and believe it belongs on the shelf of every pastor, elder and church member.

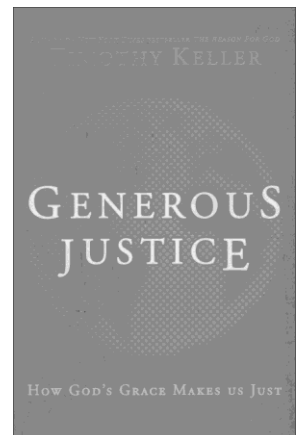
Reviewed by Kent Compton

***Generous Justice: How God's Grace Makes Us Just.* Timothy Keller. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2010, 230 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-444-70210-1**

Is there a connection between following Jesus Christ and a concern for justice in society? In *Generous Justice*, New York City pastor and church planter Tim Keller argues that “a true experience of the grace of Jesus Christ inevitably motivates a man or woman to seek justice in the world” (p. ix).

Generous Justice is divided into two major sections. In the first section, Keller outlines from the Scriptures the relationship between justice and the way God wants His people to live. Starting with the Old Testament and then working through the words of Jesus, Keller makes a case for the importance of “doing justice.” Keller defines justice as giving “all human beings their due as creations of God” (p. 18).

Though justice is defined generally as “treating people equitably” (p. 3), Keller argues that the Bible’s discussion of justice typically focuses on the way a society cares for and takes up the cause of the “widows, orphans, immigrants, and the poor” (p. 4). He makes this case by exploring the way



God's laws protected those most vulnerable in society and by exploring the accusations that the prophets and Jesus made against Israel. Keller writes, "Doing justice includes not only the righting of wrongs, but generosity and social concern, especially toward the poor and vulnerable" (p. 18).

The second section of the book deals with practical applications of doing justice in modern society. Keller not only deals with how Christians should do justice in their personal private lives, but he also deals with how Christians are to do justice in the public square.

Keller's practical suggestions for doing justice are not geared simply to Christians in major cities like New York. He stimulates the reader's imagination at times by asking questions like, "In your locale . . . are there elderly, disabled, single parents, chronically ill, or new immigrants who need aid?" (p. 133) His challenge is for Christians to begin listening to their community's needs, wherever they may find themselves.

Keller does not shy away from the difficult questions related to the church's role in doing justice. He makes clear that the church's primary responsibility is evangelism and discipleship, but he also believes evangelism and social justice "exist in an asymmetrical, inseparable relationship" (p. 139). He writes, "We must neither confuse evangelism with doing justice, nor separate them from one another" (p. 143).

So what is the church's role? Keller believes that congregations should try to meet the immediate physical and economic needs of their people and their community. However, he believes the local church should leave the more ambitious work of social reform to cooperative associations and organizations – in the tradition of Abraham Kuyper (p. 146). While churches should seek to become "healing communities", they should encourage their parishioners to be "healers of communities" and "to be organizers for just communities" (p. 132).

Throughout both sections of this work, Keller never allows his call for justice to be disconnected from experiencing God's grace. He concludes his work with a reflection on the incarnation. Not only did God become man, but also He "knows what it's like to be the victim of injustice, to stand up to power, to face a corrupt system and be killed for it" (p. 187). Keller continues, "He not only became one of the actually poor and marginalized, he stood in the place of all those of us in spiritual poverty and bankruptcy . . . and paid our debt" (p. 188). It is only when Christians firmly grasp this that they will be able to truly give help to the vulnerable.

Though the book is full of deep exegetical reflections, it is quite readable. The average reader, whether Christian or not, could pick up this work and clearly follow Keller's arguments. Pastors and students of theology will spend the majority of their time engaging Keller's lengthy thirty-eight pages of endnotes where he interacts with major biblical commentators and theologians.

Keller is at his best when he is analyzing and engaging cultural trends and issues as they relate to doing justice today. He quotes from a tremendous

number of thinkers, from Aristotle to Barack Obama. He also engages a variety of sources, from the *Harvard Law Review* to the *Northwestern Journal of Human Rights*. Keller interacts with and engages contemporary struggles to promote justice in society, especially in the United States. He helps the reader to see the ways in which everybody brings their faith to the public square, and he then encourages Christians not to be “silent about the Biblical roots of their passion for justice” (p. 169).

Admittedly, Keller’s intended audience is the West. Many international readers may struggle to understand the significance of Keller’s critique of contemporary American approaches to justice. Also, many international readers may have a difficult time fully comprehending Keller’s illustrations as the majority of them deal with racial tensions and social injustices that have a history in the American Civil Rights Movement.

Some readers may find themselves frustrated with the way Keller only associates the Bible’s call for justice with watching out for the disadvantaged. In the beginning of the work, Keller argues that justice “means more than just punishment of wrongdoing,” but it also means, “to give people their rights” (p. 3). Keller does not engage with how or if “doing justice” includes encouraging the punishment of wrongdoing. He also never engages with whether or not the Christian community ought to work hard to bring justice to people like the unborn. Some readers may be left wondering if God’s understanding of justice means more than watching out for the needs of the vulnerable.

Keller is working from the perspective of the theology of the Westminster Confession of Faith, which affirms the general equity principle of the law and the understanding that Israel was a unique theocratic state. Such underpinnings Keller does not explore extensively in this book. No doubt some readers would like these topics explored in depth, but that does not appear to be the author’s intended purpose. Furthermore, Keller does not extensively enter into the issues of the kingdom and eschatology nor does he enter into depth on the modern debate that is currently raging in some Reformed circles known as the Two Kingdom Debate. He appears to be writing with a passionate theme that if a believer knows grace, the pursuit of justice will be a fruit of that grace. Keller also presents a very carefully nuanced understanding of Word and deed. He sees these as “intermingled” and very much in the tradition of the Lausanne Covenant.

In conclusion, Keller has written a very provocative book, and it is impossible to read the work without seeing a connection between experiencing God’s grace and having a concern for justice. Though this book will certainly put the reader on a quest to practise justice, it may also leave many questions about justice unanswered in the reader’s mind. Perhaps these latter points raise the question overall, “Did the author attempt to do too much in this book and thus miss some significant points which could have clarified many issues?” Maybe the topic demanded two books so that possible misunder-

standings would not arise. Then again, how many conservative evangelical and Reformed authors do you know that are writing on this subject? Keller is to be commended for taking the bold step to write about the subject, and this will certainly stimulate much needed discussion in the evangelical community.

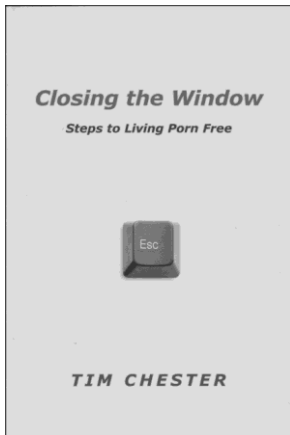
Kyle A. Hackmann is an ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church in America and is currently the assistant pastor of Grace Toronto Church. He is a graduate of Moody Bible Institute, Chicago and of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.



***Closing the Window: Steps to Living Porn Free.* Tim Chester. Downers Groves, IL: IVP, 2010, 151 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8308-3842-4**

Few things have blind-sided the church in the last generation like the mainstreaming and accessibility of pornography. Tim Chester says that, “In our culture sex is everything and sex is nothing” (p.120). And while this has generally been the case for the last couple of generations, yet it has been significantly accelerated by the Internet and has left the church scrambling to cope.

Tim Chester is a church planter, Bible teacher and co-leader of the Crowded House, a group of church planting networks. He has authored books entitled *Good News to the Poor*, *The Message of Prayer* and *You Can Change*.



Chester has given the church a very important and useful book in *Closing the Window*. The author begins by showing the catastrophic consequences that internet porn, in particular, is having on the church (not only with men, but women also). He found, through his own online survey and those of others, that 60% of men have looked at porn within the last year and, bringing it closer to home, that 33% of church leaders have visited sexually explicit sites in the last year (p. 9). This

all begs the question, “What is all of this doing to the spiritual vitality and holiness of Christ’s church?”

Chester brings the fruit of years of conversations with Christian men to these pages and wisely relates the problems and solution in the lives of the victims themselves. He is able to deal upfront and honestly with the problem, without being overly descriptive about what people are watching, while providing a safe atmosphere for discussing a very sensitive and provocative

topic. People struggling with it are already painfully aware of the content, so he does not pursue it further here. What he does explore are some of the reasons why people gravitate toward pornography; he then offers compelling and indeed exciting reasons for repenting.

In chapter one, Chester looks at the lies behind the promises of the fulfillment porn offers people, the excuses people give for indulging in it and the reality of the devastation it leaves. He outlines twelve reasons to leave porn; these include the fact that it wrecks one's view of sex and of women and consequently women's views of themselves. Furthermore, he shows that the people involved in the porn industry are real imaging-bearing men and women, sons and daughters who are often victims themselves and are being exploited through violence and drugs. Those who indulge in pornography are abetting such victimization. Closer to home, porn wrecks families and marriage covenants. It is nothing short of adultery against one's spouse. It enslaves people as much as it deceives them; it promises satisfaction while leaving people wanting to satisfy an appetite that has become increasing insatiable (p. 27). The wake of destruction widens as Chester reveals how pornography erodes character and conscience while at the same time wastes precious time, energy and, for many, money. Chester gives a staggering fact and shows that the pornography industry is economically bigger than Amazon, Microsoft, Google, eBay and Yahoo *combined* (p. 30). Lastly, the author shows how porn ruins service and leaves people open to the wrath of God (pp. 33-35). All of these topics he opens up in a way that not only leaves the reader with a clearer and more abhorrent view of the industry but also appreciative of the grace of God that is held out to all who struggle.

This is where Chester gives most of his attention. While it is one thing to outline the problem and its destructive aspects and offer suggestions for dealing with it, Chester shows convincingly that ultimately only the grace of God is the victor in the war on porn. (See chapter three, "Freed by the Grace of God".) Only as the Christian has a full appreciation of the grace of God in Christ is he prevented from not only sinking beneath the flood of guilt pornography brings but also enabled to ultimately win the battle. Chester shows that the battle for the Christian lies in seeing that the promises and attractiveness of God are infinitely greater than the lie of porn. The call is to a God-centred approach rather than self-worship. The porn addict has to see that he or she is guilty of idolatry and self-worship. Conversely, Chester says, "Consider his merits, his worth, his glory, his beauty, his kindness, his grace, his holiness, his power" (p. 63). Quoting a French writer he says, "If you want to build a ship, don't drum up people to collect wood and don't assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea" (p. 115). This sums up for me the gracious spirit of this book.

The author says that the fight against pornography will not be won alone, but it is in relationships, accountability partners and couples being painfully open and honest with one another about what they are going through that

progress will be made. It means accepting one another as sinners but offering the hope of God's mercy to one another in the transformation process.

Though it is not a large work, Tim Chester has left no stone unturned in exploring the many ways and examining the many reasons why one ought to turn his or her back on pornography.

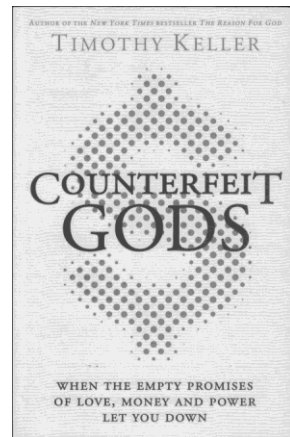
This may not be a book that will break the habit in someone's life immediately, for, as Chester says, the battle is rarely won overnight. However, I cannot think of a better starting place than this. Warmly recommended.

Reviewed by Kent Compton

***Counterfeit Gods: When the Empty Promises of Love, Money and Power Let You Down.* Timothy Keller. London: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd., 2009, 210 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-340-99508-2**

In one of his most recent books, Dr. Timothy Keller, author of *The Reason for God* and *The Prodigal God*, brings to bear his years of pastoral and exegetical experience to tackle the extremely relevant issue of idolatry. Particularly noticeable from the onset is the immense personal challenge set to the background of the redemptive history of idolatry. In the introduction Tim Keller introduces the important guiding question, "What is an idol?" This is potentially a profound question for a modern audience whose conception of idolatry might terminate on wooden statues and graven images, and yet Keller is quick to develop this in line with David Powlison and even C.S. Lewis saying¹, "It is anything more important to you than God, anything that absorbs your heart and imagination more than God, anything you seek to give you what only God can give" (p. xvii). This means that idols are everywhere, that humanity is one big idol factory in its truest sense: trusting, loving, obeying and being fulfilled by idols.

Even from the introduction and first chapter, Keller subtly prods the reader to ask the question, "What are you most satisfied with – the Creator or his creation?" Throughout the bulk of the book, he develops this theme to engage three relevant idols: love, money and power. By carefully illustrating



¹ Lewis, C.S. "First and Second Things", in *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 278-280; and David Powlison, "Idols of the Heart and 'Vanity Fair'", *The Journal of Biblical Counseling* 13.2 (Winter 1995): 35-50.

each topic with a biblical narrative, Keller leaves one not only with a biblical account of each particular idol but also provides a framework by which to practically understand them. Keller helpfully acknowledges the multifaceted nature of sin and defines it as coming in clusters, an “idolatry structure”; these he calls the “‘deep idols’ within the heart beneath the more concrete and visible ‘surface idols’ that we serve” (p. 64). This proves to be an important contribution because it does not allow sin to be truncated to merely failure to obey the moral law or external behavior. Keller’s “idolatry structure” confronts not only law-breaking but also the conditions of law-keeping and thus exposes the more hidden idols of religion and culture. This is yet again an important contribution which broadens the definition of sin to encompass every area of life, every action, every motivation and everything a person does; each time the reader is confronted with the question, “Do I feel that I must have this thing to be fulfilled and satisfied?” (p. 170)

As Keller develops this concept throughout the book, one quickly realizes that his or her idols are usually good things that have been allowed to take primacy in the heart as ultimately fulfilling. But in typical Keller fashion, he does not leave the reader in a condition of despair nor does he give a watered-down, therapeutic answer that merely provides principles and practicalities divorced from the gospel. True to the biblical account, he points the reader to the gospel, to God as revealed in Jesus Christ – the ultimate fulfillment of humanity’s deepest desires.

This is an excellent addition to the impressive catalogue of books Tim Keller has already produced. It comes highly recommended as a guide for discerning modern idolatry and for providing practical ways to bring the gospel to bear against our own personal, cultural and religious idols. This book is guaranteed to unearth some form of idolatry in everyone while providing the gospel as the answer in clear and defined terms.

Ryan Mark Barnhart is the associate pastor at Faith Bible Church, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island and a graduate of Moody Bible Institute. His theological interests include J. G. Hamann and Hans Urs von Balthasar.



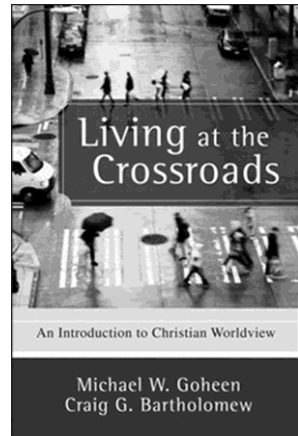
***Living at the Crossroads: An Introduction to Christian World View.* Michael W. Goheen and Craig G. Bartholomew. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008, 205 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8010-3140-3**

When I was first asked to review this introduction to a Christian worldview by Michael Goheen and Craig Bartholomew, I immediately mused over whether or not there was really a need for another book on

worldviews for the sake of the Christian community. Have we not been adequately inundated with works explaining to us the necessity of a theistic worldview and the rationality of a Trinitarian God as the only plausible explanation for the unity and diversity we see in nature? However, I had been reading an article addressing youth culture by Allison Thomas in Ravi Zacharias' *Beyond Opinion*. She laments over the anti-intellectual state of many of today's Christian young people who find in church a recreation room for social events rather than an arena preparing them to meet the hostile forces of our world's anti-religious mind.¹

Moreover, current statistics tell us that children from Christian families are leaving the faith at alarming numbers.² In my interaction with college students, I have found that this is often not primarily because they have encountered an intellectual argument that persuasively describes a worldview or system of thought that seems more intellectually tenable than the one that had been inculcated to them by their church. Rather, they are confronted by the first intellectual proposal for a system of belief that they have ever encountered. Consequently, they are seduced, not because it is a superior argument but because, to their ears, it sounds like the first rational argument, either for or against the idea of a theistic universe, that they have ever heard. Lacking skills in critical thinking, they are then faced with the Christophobic hostility which is prevalent on college campuses across our country. It follows then that another book exploring the conflict of worldviews has value only insofar as it implores lessons from the historical trajectory of past worldviews and creatively engages the current manifestation of these worldviews in a relevant manner.

Goheen and Bartholomew do precisely that for they recognize that a "world view is not first of all a rational system of beliefs but rather a story about the world" (p. 5). As the struggling sage of the Scriptures puts it, God has placed eternity in our hearts. The authors correctly understand this to mean that God has given us an organic sense of being part of a larger story. As image bearers we have an innate awareness of our own finitude within the context of eternity. Consequently, understanding worldviews begins with recognizing that God created us to require some kind of larger story within which we must situate our lives. Since we are story-shaped people with a



¹ Ravi Zacharias, gen. ed., *Beyond Opinion: Living the Faith We Defend* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2007), 40-59.

² A few years ago George Barna conducted a study revealing that "65 percent of high school students stop attending church after they graduate". Derek Melleby, "Why students abandon their faith: Lessons from William Wilberforce", from the Centre for Parent/Youth Understanding.

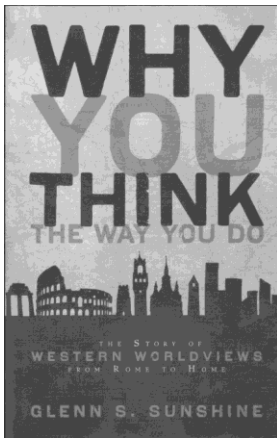
beginning and an end, a point of view and a setting, plot and resolution, protagonists and antagonists, it follows that narrative is the most organic way in which we may understand our Creator, ourselves and the world. The insight of this book is its recognition of the need for us to understand the idea of a worldview within the context of a narrative and story. Within the current evangelical milieu where we are losing the battle for the mind of our children, we need to engage the narratives of the world with the biblical narrative and present the gospel story as story rather than a list of propositional assertions so that we might begin to reclaim this world for its Lord and Creator.

Reviewed by Al Breitreuz. He is the lead pastor at Bedford Presbyterian Church, Nova Scotia and is currently undertaking post-graduate studies in art and theology at St. Andrews University, Scotland.



***Why You Think the Way You Do: The Story of Western Worldviews from Rome to Home.* Glenn S. Sunshine. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009, 240 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-310-29230-2**

Sunshine's aim in this book is to explain "the development of Western civilization from the perspective of the changes in worldview from the Roman Empire to the early years of the twenty-first century." Since the book is two hundred and fifteen pages plus notes, the view is bound to be from a vantage point 35,000 feet in the air – and so it proves. Sunshine provides not an exhaustive summary but snapshots of main eras in Western history by highlighting selected themes and underlining the beliefs that influenced each era's characteristic ways of being and doing. The author is professor of history at Central Connecticut State University and also works with the Wilberforce Forum and Prison Fellowship's BreakPoint; he formerly taught at Cal-Calvin College and Universität der Bundeswehr-Hamburg.



Why You Think the Way You Do commences with brief definitions of worldview, the most important of which is worldview as a set of beliefs about the world, truth, and morality, which enables any society to function effectively (p. 15). This remains the book's normal, but not only, usage of

“worldview.” Sometimes “worldview” also is used for individual views or, in the final two chapters, for New Age notions lacking wide consensus.

In successive chapters, Sunshine provides a theologically informed history of ancient Rome, its transformation by Christianity, and Rome’s end leading to the medieval worldview. He especially underlines medieval politics and economics. Following this the reader is then led into the breakdown of medievalism with the rise of scientific reason, the modern era, and modernity’s decay into postmodernism. The author provides colourful details which enliven the exposition, for example, astronomer Tycho Brahe’s multiple noses (prostheses needed after a sword duel). In his theological history writing, Sunshine follows the pattern of Andrew Hoffer’s edited volume *Revolutions in Worldview* (2007) as well as Francis Schaeffer’s “How Then Shall We Live?” film series (1976), whose insights he seems to echo at certain points.

Sunshine’s conclusion is that Western, especially American, societies have arrived at a situation much like that of ancient Rome. As did the early church, evangelical Christians should strive to present an alternative to majority culture. The last chapters support key positions of the culture war including creationism, opposition to abortion, and resistance to politically correct speech. Themes in medievalism and modernity turn out to have been selected to set up the biblical status of American constitutional arrangements, such as divided powers of government (pp. 151-154), or to justify free enterprise.

Sunshine does not emphasize that the modern world is founded on Christian suppositions gone wrong. He apparently missed the changed philosophical commitments that led from medievalism’s controlled economies to unfettered markets, as profiled by Bob Goudzwaard in *Capitalism and Progress* (1979) or the way that the development of modern science depended on new understandings of the Bible, from Peter Harrison’s many books. It is not true that empirical science does not depend on significant philosophical commitments (p. 165). Charles Taylor’s works, such as *Sources of the Self* (1989) or *A Secular Age* (2007), make modernity seem as much a Protestant heresy as anything. For example, the American stress on the freedom of the individual conscience arose from the Baptist movement, so that pluralistic society can reasonably be said to be a Baptist contribution. William Rowe even showed that the concept of a “worldview” was minted when humanity came to see itself as central after the scientific revolution and the Enlightenment era. Developing a genuinely Christian counter-culture is more tricky and contentious due to the close kinship of Christianity to modernity. Many Christians will tend to see economic freedom, for instance, as part of the Christian heritage, as Sunshine does. Others will emphasize Adam Smith’s “invisible hand” as a corruption of the doctrine of providence. Defending isolated positions – undeniably important – is only one aspect of relevant Christian witness in contemporary western societies.

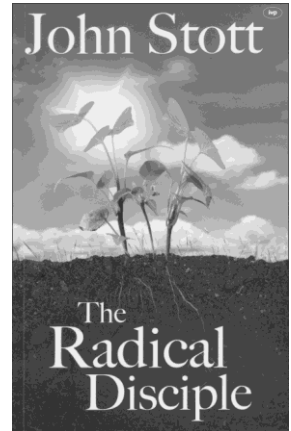
While the title claims to tell readers why they think as they do, a more accurate title would be “A Celebration of Christian Contributions to Western Society.” For such a celebration, Jonathan Hill’s *What has Christianity Ever Done For Us?* (IVP, 2005) is more far-sighted and as entertaining a volume, without the American culture-warrior edginess.

Ted Newell is a professor of worldview and educational foundations at Crandall University, Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada.



***The Radical Disciple: Wholehearted Christian Living.* John Stott. Nottingham, England: IVP, 2010, 144 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-84474-421-3**

It is a fairly common practice to give a card to friends who are leaving or even throw them a farewell party. What is not so common is for the one who is leaving to give a gift to those who are staying. This is precisely the purpose of John Stott’s latest and final book, *The Radical Disciple*. Until his death in July 2011, Stott was Rector Emeritus of All Souls Church, Langham Place, London and Founder-President of the Langham Partnership International. This book was his farewell to believers around the world who had benefited from his ministry and testimony.



Stott uses the preface to the book to explain the words of his book title: “radical” and “disciples”. Concerning “disciples”, he points out that the word simply means “under discipline”. Stott says, “My concern in this book is that we who claim to be disciples of the Lord Jesus will not provoke him to say again: ‘Why do you call me, “Lord, Lord,” and do not do what I say?’ (Luke 6:46)” (p. 16).

The second word, “radical”, is used as an adjective to modify “disciple” in order to show that every aspect of our lives as Christians must be under the lordship of Jesus Christ.

With these introductory thoughts in mind, the book then goes on to discuss eight characteristics of Christian discipleship. Each characteristic is given one chapter: non-conformity, Christlikeness, maturity, creation-care, simplicity, balance, dependence, and death. The chapters are fairly short (most are under fifteen pages), yet there is a depth of writing that leaves the reader with the impression that Stott has been reading, meditating and synthesizing for many, many years. The simplicity of style is by no means simplistic and

is very helpful in a generation when many are not accustomed to extensive reading.

This book could easily be used in a group study over an eight to ten week period. The chapters are even short enough that they could be read together at the study followed by a time of discussion and prayer. There are Scripture references throughout but not as many as one might expect. The reader definitely has the impression that Stott has written his work to express his thoughts at the close of his life rather than as a carefully prepared study of the Word on various topics.

Throughout the book, there appears to be another, unstated purpose: to promote the work of the Lausanne Movement as well as the Langham Partnership Trust. These two organizations (with which Stott was intimately involved) are used as examples throughout and the name Chris Wright appears frequently. Chris Wright, successor to Stott in Langham and also Chairman of the Theology Working Group for Lausanne III, was mentored by Stott over many years. One wonders if a strong second purpose of the book is to publically “pass the baton” and thereby encourage readers to remain involved in these two movements that were so obviously dear to the heart of Stott.

Those who have appreciated Stott’s life and ministry will once again be challenged and blessed by this, his last, book. Those who are not familiar with Stott will sense a depth of spiritual maturity and will want to learn more from this dear brother in the Lord who befriended and served so many worldwide.

Reviewed by Nancy J. Whytock

The Lord of Glory: Day by Day Devotions with Your Children.
Jim Cromarty. Darlington, England/Carlisle, PA: EP Publishing,
2010, 767 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-85234-684-6

Jim Cromarty wrote this devotional out of a deep desire for Christian families to return to the practice of family worship. *The Lord of Glory* contains a year’s worth of devotions centred around the life and teaching of Jesus in the four gospels.

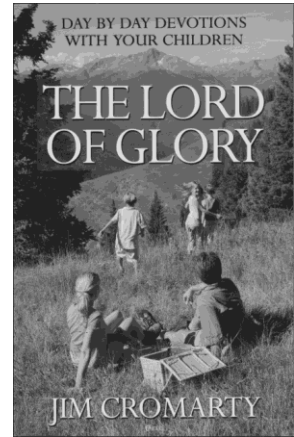
Each dated devotion neatly covers two pages and begins with a Scripture verse and a reference for the passage of Scripture to be read that day (anywhere between five verses and an entire chapter). The devotion provides commentary on the Scripture passage. Then there are three thought-provoking questions for family discussion. There are also a few sentences for meditating on throughout the day. Finally, each day ends with “Wise Words”, usually a pertinent quote by a Christian author. J. C. Ryle is the most often quoted, but there are a great variety of others, including Reform-

ers and Puritans and even a few present-day authors such as Jerry Bridges and Gordon Keddie.

I especially appreciated the items for meditation each day. I found them very heart-oriented as they sought to lead each individual to apply something of the day's lesson to his or her own life. Sometimes I was prompted to examine my heart and actions. At other times I was gently led to a response of worship and praise to God for an aspect of what He has done as highlighted in the day's lesson.

While the cover of this devotional boasts a beautiful family with young children probably between the ages of six and ten, I think this devotional is more suited to families with slightly older children. Unlike some of Cromarty's previous books for family worship,¹ this devotional has very little illustration. Even the occasional story is limited to one or two sentences at the beginning of the devotion and is designed to draw you directly in to a serious commentary on the Scripture passage of the day. While the devotions are not dry or boring, I do not think they will draw the attention of younger children. I thought that a few illustrations could have added some clarity of understanding without taking away from the depth of the study. Second, the language is not particularly simple. Flipping through a few pages again, I see the words "derogatory", "neutrality", and "acknowledgement" used as a matter of course. These issues need not be insurmountable, of course. How useful this devotional will be for younger families will depend largely on how well parents are able to engage their children at their own level during the discussion time.

For families with teenaged children, this devotional is ideal. The lack of fluff is a benefit for those looking to delve deeply into the Scripture with their families. The questions for discussion are thought-provoking and would have interested me as a teenager (as they do now). The daily item for meditation will help every member of the family cultivate a habit of applying the Word to their hearts. Despite the subtitle, I would also recommend this devotional to couples without children. There is nothing in the devotional itself to suggest that it is aimed particularly at children. This could even be used as a personal devotional for an older teen or adult. Even though the questions for discussion may not be fully utilized when going through this devotional alone, everything else it contains will be a blessing. I believe *The Lord of Glory: Day by Day Devotions with your Children* could be helpful to a wider



¹ See Jim Cromarty's series, Books for Family Reading, *Take Care in the Bath* (Darlington, UK: Evangelical Press, 1999), and *A Sad Little Dog!* (Darlington, UK: Evangelical Press, 2000).

audience than its title suggests, and I hope it will be picked up by many seeking to build a habit of daily Bible study and meditation.

For durability, perhaps the publishers should have released this book in hardback form rather than paperback.

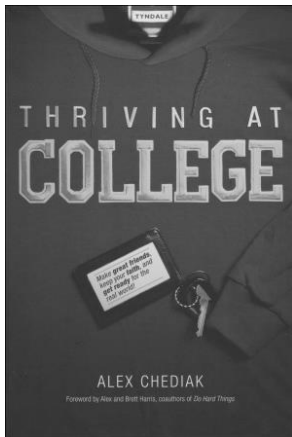
Reviewed by Nelleke Plouffe. Nelleke and her husband, Stephen, are the parents of two young sons, Seth and Josiah. They live in Donagh, Prince Edward Island.



***Thriving at College: Make Great Friends, Keep Your Faith, and Get Ready for the Real World!* Alex Chediak. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2011, 327 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-4143-3963-4**

Professor and author Alex Chediak's new book, *Thriving at College*, is a helpful preparatory guide for high school students preparing to enter into their next stage of education. It also offers insightful advice for those who may already be attending a college or university.

Chediak's approach to the topic is structured around several core areas of a student's life: relationships, academics and spirituality. Using this well-defined approach, he then breaks each area into sub-categories. The intended



audience is not limited to students choosing to attend specific institutions. Chediak addresses those in Christian centres of higher learning as well as those in secular schools. With a conscious recognition of the difference between these two environments, he then lays out the challenges and benefits which are unique to each. For example, he notes that while in a secular learning environment, Christian students will face much opposition towards their faith and will be presented with lifestyles very different from their own. For this reason it is essential that students know what they believe and why they believe it. Chediak does not shy away from the disturbing truth that many

Christian youth fall away from the faith when they reach a secular setting. Instead, he confronts the real issue and provides wise advice to ensure growth rather than regression.

As Chediak is realistic in his view of the secular university, he is equally as realistic in his discussion of the Christian university. He acknowledges the obvious benefits of being at a Christian institution which builds up your faith, but he also warns against becoming absorbed into the bubble of a Christian community. It is possible for students to use the strong Christian environ-

ment around them as a crutch for their spiritual life rather than a catalyst for their own personal relationship with God.

The author's advice as it relates to practical matters is also very helpful. As someone who has spent years in higher education both as a student and a professor (presently as a professor of engineering and physics at California Baptist University), Chediak understands what is required of a student and what methods will ensure that they thrive. With insight on everything from class scheduling, sleeping patterns, roommate issues and social time, he realizes the many ingredients that compose a successful student.

The book would be incomplete without an explanation as to why it is important to thrive at college. This explanation is not ignored as Chediak discusses the human mind and its ability to glorify God. Those blessed with the opportunity of a college or university experience ought to make the most of it by doing their absolute best as an act of worship.

I would personally recommend this book to anyone grappling with questions about their future in college. Whether you are a student preparing for higher education or you are already attending college and you need advice, this book is for you. It is well grounded in biblical truth and does not neglect the practical issues of life. Another book which may be a helpful resource is Rick Ostrander's *Why College Matters to God*.

Reviewed by Andrew Whytock, an English major at Cornerstone University, Grand Rapids, Michigan.



Book Briefs

In this section we acknowledge new books we have received over the last year for which we have not provided full book reviews. We have organized these into topical categories to help readers become aware of new books in specific areas. Unless otherwise stated, all book briefs are by the editor.

Pastoral Theology

***Portraits of a Radical Disciple: Recollections of John Stott's Life and Ministry.* Ed., Christopher J. H. Wright. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2011, 241 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8308-3810-3**

The publishers certainly did a record job in getting this work out in late 2011 following John Stott's death on July 27, 2011. It contains thirty-five essays from colleagues and friends of John Stott, and that this could be accomplished in 2011 is quite astounding. However, then we learn in the preface that the origins of the book go back to 2005. This book is to serve as a much more personal portrait than the official two-volume biography by Timothy Dudley-Smith or the later work by Roger Steer. The divisions of the book are: "Early and Formative Years", "All Souls and the Wider Church of England", "International Influence", "Wider Interests", "The Study Assistants" and "The Final Lap". Readers will discover many fascinating details about Stott's life, personality and warmth as a Christian. This is a necessary read for all who want to know about this very significant leader within evangelicalism and written at a very accessible level. It is most instructive and edifying to read such a unique biographical work. Highly recommended.

***Funeral Training: Visiting the Bereaved, Organising and Conducting a Funeral.* [Nigel Barge and Philip Malloch]. Edinburgh: Rutherford House, 2010, 58 pp., paper. No ISBN**

There are very few resources available for evangelical ministry concerning funerals. *Funeral Training*, published under the auspices of Rutherford House, is a helpful resource. This small book is divided into two parts, "Visiting the Bereaved" and "Organising and Conducting a Funeral"; under each part there are three chapters. Part I: Preparing for your visit, Understanding Bereavement, and Pastoral Experience; and Part II: *Before* the Funeral Day, *On* the Funeral Day, and *After* the Funeral Day. There are also appendices

about psalm and hymn ideas, Bible readings and an annotated book list. The book's context is Scotland, but the majority of the material will be helpful in most western based pastoral training courses and will certainly fill a real need.

***When the Word Leads Your Pastoral Search: Biblical Principles & Practices to Guide Your Search.* Chris Brauns. Chicago: Moody, 2011, 192 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8024-4984-9**

Here is another subject within pastoral theology which is virtually never addressed, nor will you find many resources on the subject, so Chris Brauns' book is a most welcome work. The author is a seasoned pastor in a Congregational church in Illinois. The work is clearly evangelical and Word-based. His introduction begins with the "dating" illustration paralleling a pastoral call, followed by eleven short chapters plus a short conclusion, then ten "Frequently Asked Questions". The chapters are aimed to help pastoral search committees understand what preaching is and what to consider in a candidate in this regard. Instinctively I could hear some saying, "We could skip that." Realism tells me that this must not be skipped over. His "unity building exercises" (p. 48) are most helpful to the search process and are often missed. Brauns is very clear in chapter five, "Look for a Shepherd", and lays out his answer in seven sub-points. (The chapter is worth the book.) Part three of the book, "Make Those Dates (Interviews) Count", is very practical advice for any search committee. His suggested questions are the ones that too many times are missed by committees, yet if they are asked future difficulties may be avoided for all parties. He urges a search committee to learn to evaluate such things as whether or not the candidate has both the tools and experience to preach "week in and week out" and how he plans to organize for ministry. Warmly recommended.

***God Is Always Good: Cassidy's Story.* J. Cameron Fraser and Sonya M. Taekema. Belleville, ON: Guardian Books, 2011, 125 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-55452-607-9**

This small book is both story/diary and observation of two individuals dealing with life-threatening cancer, namely the one author, J. Cameron Fraser, and Cassidy Taekema, the daughter of the other author, Sonya M. Taekema. The book's title roots this work in the doctrine of God's providence in application to the sufferings of a believer. Bob De Moor described the content very succinctly: "Cameron Fraser and Sonya Taekema favour us with two such intimate conversations, one nestled inside the other." That last phrase describes this book extremely well – "one nestled inside the other". This book is reality, but reality through the eyes of believers. A glossary of medical terms is included. References to relevant materials by authors Joni

Eareckson Tada, John Piper and C. John (Jack) Miller are made. The work is a testimony to the goodness of the Lord amidst suffering.

***Real Marriage: The Truth About Sex, Friendship, and Life Together.* Mark and Grace Driscoll. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2012, 272 pp., hc. ISBN 978-1-4002-0383-3**

This book is divided into three parts: “Marriage”, “Sex”, and “The Last Day”, with five chapters each to parts one and two and only one chapter to part three. The chapters on marriage are not an exposition of the reasons for marriage but rather concentrate on friendship in marriage, submission and forgiveness and include much illustration, both from the authors’ lives and cultural examples. Part two will be the part which will no doubt be read first by many, will create some hard-hitting critique by many, and also will be applauded by many because it tackles sexual issues not generally discussed so openly. “Mark and Grace don’t pull punches or gloss over difficult issues . . . and that’s what’s going to make this book unlike any that’s come before it”, writes Brian Hampton of Thomas Nelson. I anticipate that this book will be the most discussed book on marriage for the years 2012 and 2013, but that alone does not necessarily qualify it as having lasting value. There are better books available than this for a catholic or universal market or readership as this one appears to be very contextual.

400th Anniversary of the King James Version Bible

***The Holy Bible 1611 Edition King James Version 400th Anniversary.* Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2010, no page count. hc, ISBN 978-1-56563-808-2; genuine leather, ISBN 978-56563-162-5**

This is a brilliant facsimile edition of the original 1611 Authorized Version of the Bible, or the King James Version. This edition by Hendrickson has several selling features: it is a true facsimile “word for word and page for page”; it includes the original preface and translators’ notes, the Apocrypha just as the 1611 did, plus liturgical tables as in the original, and additional essays which the publishers have selected. These essays include John R. Kohlenberger III’s “Publisher’s Preface, The Version of 1611: From 1911 to 2011” and Alfred W. Pollard’s “Bibliographical Introduction”, an absolutely invaluable essay of almost fifty pages. The facsimile is available as a hard-back and also in genuine leather; both bindings include the ribbon marker. This facsimile is printed in China.

***A Visual History of the King James Bible: The Dramatic Story of the World's Best-Known Translation.* Donald L. Brake with Shelly Beach. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011, 283 pp., hc. ISBN 978-0-8010-1347-8**

Here is the essential work about the King James Version of the Bible to possess or have in a college library. It is full of details about the fifty-four translators, yet it is also full of visuals to complement the text (eighty-five illustrations) and has a beautiful jacket cover. Brake is a world-class authority on his subject and writes with respect, with ease and for the non-specialist. The author helps us understand the development of the English language, early English Bibles, the parties of Protestants of the KJV time and the translation/revision process. He also examines matters of the actual printing of the KJV. Included also is a list of descendants of the King James Version Bible. This work contains two excellent appendices, one which compares the KJV with other sixteenth century translations and modern versions and the other a chronology of the KJV. Full notes are included and a selected bibliography plus indices. A must-have book on the King James Version.

***The People's Bible: The Remarkable History of the King James Version.* Derek Wilson. Oxford: Lion, 2010, 222 pp., hc. ISBN 978-0-7459-5550-6**

Unlike Brake's work mentioned above, this book is chiefly a written text with only eleven illustrations. It has a warm endorsement in the foreword by the noted biblical scholar Alec Motyer, who correctly commends the author for pointing us to the vivid orality of the KJV. "Therefore they studied the impact of their work on the ear as much as upon the mind. I, for one, would wish that a similar concern was evident in today's versions" (Motyer, p. 7). Wilson's ten chapters have wonderfully engaging titles, such as chapter seven, "A Mass of Strange Delights", and chapter ten, "Inspiration and Idolatry"; he is a good word-smith. Context of the Bible in English in chapter two, "The English Heresy", is very well done, as are all the other chapters. You do walk away with knowledge about the parties, the translators, their philosophies and their impositions. The focus is not to compare the latter with modern translations. Thus it is not a sales pitch for a particular recent translation, which I have found in some other books supposedly devoted to a celebration of the KJV. Once or twice I found the author slipped into "caricature", but overall the work is well researched and quite accessible (endnotes, not footnotes).

Church History

***With Axe and Bible: The Scottish Pioneers of New Brunswick, 1784-1874.* Lucille H. Campey. Toronto: Natural Heritage Books (Dundurn Group), 2007, 206 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-897045-22-0**

This is a regional study of a particular people group, Scottish immigrants, and their Presbyterian church in New Brunswick, Canada over a hundred-year period. It is replete with much data concerning many of the key leaders and also contains regimental and ship lists of Scots who settled in the province of New Brunswick. The book sets a context with the Acadian period, the Loyalist arrivals and the separation of New Brunswick from Nova Scotia in 1784. Then the author surveys various regions of New Brunswick where Scots settled. It is highly interesting to read. The book appears to be more heavily weighted on “the axe” than on “the Bible”. The references to the Presbyterian leaders and churches are there but not developed to any extent whereby varieties or local revivals receive any significant attention. Chapter six, “The Timber Trade Moves North: The Restigouche County Scots”, is most fascinating and poses many contemporary questions as to where the descendents of those Scottish Presbyterians are today. This book adds to regional studies in Canadian immigrant and church history for this specific demographic period and people group.

Missiology

***The Meeting of the Waters: 7 Global Currents That Will Propel the Future Church.* Fritz Kling. Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2010, 240 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-4347-6484-3**

What an engaging introduction by Kling in *The Meeting of the Waters*! By combining mainly narrative with didactic elements, Kling tells a story that revolves around two missionaries, Mission Marm and Apple Guy, and the meeting of two rivers in Brazil. A fine metaphor – the meeting of two rivers is linked with the modern reality in missions – the traditional “Mission Marm” type and the new “Apple Guy” type. Anyone involved in missions should by now have observed both, but Kling helps to take one’s unwritten observations and brings out the tremendous global changes taking place in the church and in missions today. This is a warning that if you do not read the introduction but dive into the chapters, the book will lose much of its impact. The introduction is followed by eight chapters. The first tells how Kling arrived at the “7 Global Currents”; then follow seven chapters and a conclu-

sion. The seven are: mercy, mutuality, migration, monoculture, machines, mediation and memory; each is well defined and developed. This book will be a must read for any missiologist, missionary or church or denominational leader who must wrestle with global outreach. One of the best books in the broad field of missions and leadership I have read in the past year. Unfortunately a couple of factual errors crept into the “Notes”, but they do not mar the work. A good follow-up to Stan Guthrie’s *Missions in the Third Millennium*.

Worldview

***The age of consent: a warning from history: The work of Josephine Butler.* Jennifer Davis. Newcastle-upon-Tyne: The Christian Institute, 2009, paper, 27 pp. ISBN 978-1-901086-42-3. Available as a free download booklet from www.christian.org.uk by typing in the book title on the site’s search bar.**

Today there is much discussion about sex-trafficking in many countries of the world. However, there appears to be little historical perspective on the subject. Jennifer Davis’ opening sentence will surely garner interest: “It is almost unbelievable that the UK was once a haven for European sex tourists, home to a thriving trade in child prostitutes comparable to the notorious industries of modern-day Thailand or Cambodia” (p. 8). Hence there is tremendous value in this little booklet about the virtually forgotten Josephine Butler and her campaign against sexual exploitation in the United Kingdom in the nineteenth century. The author reminds us of Josephine’s father’s connection to William Wilberforce and slavery, and this little work takes us to the next generation and another social issue. Readers will be fascinated to learn about the once infamous Contagious Diseases Act, which was only repealed in 1883. A longer biographical section would help the work, but it’s an excellent primer to read and it’s free!